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CONSERVATISM

By LORD HUGH CECIL, M.A., M.P.

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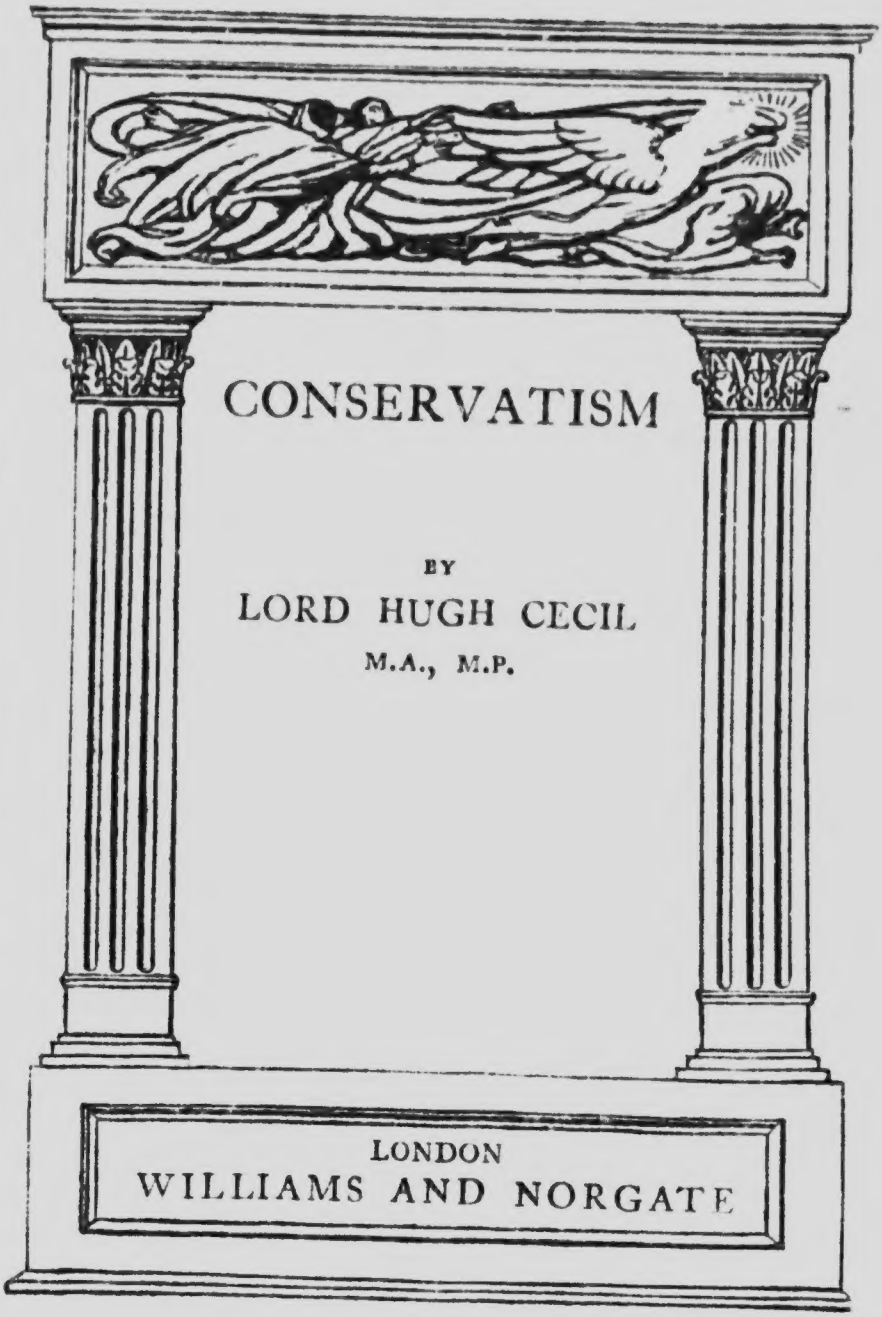

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G. B. Fisher
BRANDON, MANITOBA.

CONSERVATISM

PART I

PRELIMINARY

It is difficult to determine the extent and limitations of the subject of this book. Considered as the creed of the political party which is known by the name of Conservative, it may be made to cover all topics of political interest or partisan controversy. And these topics might be discussed with any degree of particularity, so as to extend this small volume far beyond its prescribed limits and to turn it into the likeness of an encyclopædia. Yet in escaping from this danger, political matters even of a controversial character must not be avoided if anything like a sufficient sketch of modern Conservatism is to be given. The reader must therefore be indulgent if, in the effort to reach the right mean between a vague and abstract philosophic treatise and the contentious particularity more proper to a newspaper, the book

sometimes seems too indefinite and sometimes too partisan and often lacks proportion.

A small additional difficulty must also be noted. Conservatism may be understood in two senses. It may mean the tenets of the Conservative Party, or it may mean a natural disposition in the human mind not by any means confined to those persons who vote on the Conservative side in party politics. To diminish the confusion that arises from this ambiguity I have endeavoured, when the word is used in the second sense, as what may be called pure or natural conservatism, to write it without a capital letter. When it is used in the more particular sense as the faith of the Conservative Party, it is written Conservatism.

The Conservatism of the Conservative Party, modern Conservatism, as we may say, is of course largely recruited from and dependent on the natural conservatism that is found in almost every human mind. It will be proper, therefore, to begin with some discussion of that pure or natural conservatism.

CHAPTER I

CONSERVATISM IN GENERAL

NATURAL conservatism is a tendency of the human mind. It is a disposition averse from change; and it springs partly from a distrust of the unknown and a corresponding reliance on experience rather than on theoretic reasoning; partly from a faculty in men to adapt themselves to their surroundings so that what is familiar merely because of its familiarity becomes more acceptable or more tolerable than what is unfamiliar. Distrust of the unknown, and preference for experience over theory, are deeply seated in almost all minds and are expressed in often quoted proverbs: "Look before you leap," "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "An ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory," —these are sayings that express a well-nigh universal conservative sentiment. Novelties, at the first sight, are regarded as new-fangled and either futile or dangerous by the great majority of men. They frighten and irritate, they fatigue and perplex those who for the first time seek to understand them. Human

nature shrinks from them and is wearied by them. Men feel that they live in the midst of mysteries; they dwell in the world like children in a dark room. Dangers from the unseen spiritual world, dangers from the unfathomed passions of other men, dangers from the forces of nature:—these all haunt the minds of men and make them fear to change from whatever experience has proved to be at least safe and endurable. And change is not only fearful, it is tiring. As men try to perceive and judge a new plan, the effort tires and overtasks their powers. The faculties of judgment and discernment ache within them. Why depart from the known which is safe to the unknown which may be dangerous? None would be so mad as to run the risk without much search and scrutiny. And this means perplexity, effort, confusion of mind, weariness. Why not let it alone? Why be weary instead of at rest? Why rush into danger instead of staying in safety? "I was well," says the often-quoted epitaph of an Italian tomb; "I would be better; I am here."

To all men considerations of this kind are urgent and powerful. Not a day passes but we are swayed by them. The post arrives in the morning and brings us a prospectus of a company offering attractive terms for an investment. But we do not invest in it. We

are aware that such companies are often unsound and their offers delusive; we know little of the merits of this one, and it would cost us much trouble to look into them; we are satisfied with our existing investments. Why change? It is wiser to let it alone. Presently we take up the paper and see an advertisement of a remedy for some ailment from which we suffer. But we do not buy it. These drugs are often useless and sometimes dangerous. We know too little of medicine to judge whether this particular stuff is a genuine cure or an unwholesome quackery. We are accustomed to another remedy which is not indeed perfect, but does fairly well. Why change? It is wiser to let it alone. In the same paper we read an account of an accident to a flying machine in which the aviator has been killed. It seems a foolhardy affair to us; how can men trust themselves so recklessly among such dangers? For our part we do not mean to go flying till there shall have been a great deal more experience of these machines. We do not understand how they work or what their strength or weakness is, and we have no leisure to learn. Plainly they are dangerous at present. We will let flying alone; a motor-omnibus is fast enough for us. And so in a thousand other cases, the ordinary prudent man distrusts what he has neither

tested by his own experience, nor knows to have been tested and found satisfactory by the experience of others. He prefers what he knows, even though it be imperfect, to any untested novelty however seductive it may seem. It has been impressed upon him from the days of infancy. The nursery story of the little girl who played with the matches and was so burnt to death, is but an illustration of the wisdom of distrusting the unknown.

But while to distrust the unknown in a certain degree is a matter of the simplest prudence, such distrust may exist in so extreme a form as to bar all progress. So it has been with the Chinese. For a long time the Western world was to them only the realm of foreign devils, and the inventions of modern science only infernal arts. Engineering works in the earth might stir the wrath of dragons who dwelt there. A railway train or an electric telegraph might offend some evil spirit. The terror of the unknown, of the unknown foreigner and his ways, of the unknown spiritual world and its presumed hatred of novelties,—these fears long obstructed, and to a great extent still obstruct, even the most moderate progress in China. And what is pre-eminently true of China is in some degree true of all uncivilised peoples and of ignorant or prejudiced men even in

civilised communities. The distrust of the unknown among such men is extravagant. The dread of railways at their first introduction in England is a notorious instance. And it is one of the difficulties in the path of industrial progress that workmen will often set themselves against a new machine or tool or process of manufacture with an obstinacy that is hard to overcome. The moderate prudence of the wise man who will not too lightly trust himself beyond the teachings of experience, may be intensified to the hopeless inert timidity and apathy of the barbarian and the ignoramus. It is strictly a question of degree. Progress whether in science or in the arts of government or of social life, requires a certain readiness to go beyond experience and to try novelties. Yet if that readiness be reckless and unbridled, disaster is certain. Desire to move forward and try what is new must be harmonised with distrust of the untried and fear of the dangers that may be lurking in the unknown. Wisdom is not so anxious for progress as not to be afraid of novelty; not so afraid of novelty as to be contented without progress. The two sentiments of desire to advance and fear of the dangers of moving, apparently contradictory, are in fact complementary and mutually necessary. The restraints of conservatism

are the indispensable condition of the security and efficiency of progress in all regions of human activity from Parliament to a motor-car. In both a brake is necessary to safety. And restraint is not only essential to hinder what is foolish, but also to guide and control what is wisely intended and save movement from becoming vague, wild and mischievous. Progress depends on conservatism to make it intelligent, efficient and appropriate to circumstance. Without conservatism progress may be if not destructive at least futile. The expansiveness of steam and the explosiveness of petrol are only useful when they are boxed up. A cartridge without a gun is a futility. And it is only when a man is controlling his wish to get forward with a strong sense of the risk of entering the unknown that he is likely to make wise and effectual progress.

The second great element in natural conservatism, besides distrust of the unknown, is the preference of that to which we are accustomed because custom has actually assimilated our nature to it. Human beings are so adaptable that what they are used to is, for that reason and no other, pleasant to them. This feeling of liking for the familiar constantly co-operates with distrust of the unknown and is easily confused with it, but is really distinct. Its power is most evident in matters of personal habit; such as eating,

or furniture, or dress, or religious worship. In respect to church services you may see both elements in conservatism very plainly at work. An innovation in ritual excites distrust; it is thought Popish even when in fact it cannot be connected with Popish theology; but a change in the service is also vexatious merely because we are not used to it, because it substitutes the unfamiliar for the familiar. Every one is acquainted with the irritation caused by the singing of a familiar hymn to an unfamiliar tune. This is not caused by distrust of the unknown. We are not afraid of untried dangers in the new tune. But our ears are expecting the old one; we long for the accustomed impression, and every note of the new melody disappoints us and has almost a discordant ring. But perhaps the strongest instance of the power of familiarity is in dress. Nothing disturbs people more than unfamiliarity in their own clothes, or even in the clothes of other people. The consequence is that about matters of dress even the most progressive Western peoples are intensely conservative. We speak indeed of the rapid changes in the fashions of women's dress. But in fact these changes are within very narrow limits. Any really important change is difficult and only very slowly and gradually made. Arguments in favour of wearing a divided skirt may be

good or bad, but they are ineffectual against the iron resistance of custom. And if any lady appeared in an Indian dress or in that of a lady of ancient Rome, she would be thought to be either jesting or insane. And among men the case is even stronger. No considerations of health or beauty would suffice suddenly to change the settled customs of men's dress. Artists think the dress of the fifteenth century beautiful; Dr. Jaeger has published a description of dress designed on the principles of hygiene. But no man could appear, except for fun, dressed after the manner of the fifteenth century, or after the plan of Dr. Jaeger, without creating so general an impression of insanity as gravely to imperil his right to make a will and possibly even his personal liberty. For to persons of normal mind it would seem incredible that any sane man could overcome the sense of discomfort, mental and physical, induced by wearing an unfamiliar dress. Yet it is quite possible that the more artistic or hygienic dress would, apart from familiarity, be as comfortable as ordinary clothes. But its strangeness makes it repulsive. By power of adaptation human nature loves what it is used to and cannot suddenly depart from established custom without pain.

This love of the familiar operates, as has been said, with the greatest force in respect to

matters of intimate personal habit. But it is not without power in politics. Institutions to which a country is accustomed derive great strength merely from their familiarity. Republican government, even if acceptable on other grounds, would be disagreeable to most Englishmen because we are used to Monarchy. And some political changes directly affect the personal habits of ordinary citizens. Perhaps the most formidable obstacle in the way of universal military service is that to enforce it very many people would have to submit to interference with their usual way of life.

I have endeavoured in this chapter to consider natural conservatism as a tendency of the human mind operating generally on all sorts of interests, and not merely on politics. It is important that we should at the outset have a clear and vivid idea of conservatism in what may be called its pure form as a mental disposition, before we go on to consider it in combination with other motives as the composite political Conservatism which is the topic of this book. With the same purpose it may be well to review briefly the import of conservatism in relation to some lines of human progress other than politics.

It has already been pointed out that though conservatism seems at first sight to be the direct opposite of progress, it is an essential

element in making it safe and effectual. The prudence of conservatism must control the zeal for advance or evil will come of it. A chief, though not of course the only, problem for men in all progress is to mingle the two dispositions in the right proportions, not to be too bold or hurried and not to be too prudent or dilatory. This work of harmonising progressivism with conservatism is done with various degrees of ease in the different spheres of human activity. And it may perhaps be said that the harmony is most easily obtained where progress is most by experimental methods. In the researches of natural science, in mechanics, and in medicine and surgery, most of the difficulties are faced and most of the problems solved under artificial conditions which avoid or limit the possible dangers. The chemist works in his laboratory on a small scale and with careful precautions; the surgeon dissects a dead body before he operates upon a living one, and operates upon an animal before he operates upon a human being; the mechanician makes a working model and tests it before he builds the full-sized machine. Every step is, whenever possible, tested by experiment in these matters before risks are run. In this way the unknown is robbed of most of its terrors, and though there are still dangers to be encountered (as in the case of aviation to-day)

and temperaments at work more or less bold or cautious, yet upon the whole the distinction is not felt to be an important one, and we do not usually speak of conservative or progressive scientists, doctors, or mechanicians. It is true that the conservative tendency which springs from mere love of the familiar does operate upon these minds. It is of this we are thinking when we speak of an old-fashioned doctor. But this phrase usually implies censure; for love of the familiar is only a defensible motive when the object is mainly or entirely to give satisfaction to the lovers of the familiar. When there is a positive gain or loss in question, like the curing of an illness, it is, unlike distrust of the unknown, an unworthy motive. A doctor who rejects a new treatment merely because he is not used to it, or even because his patient is not used to it, is a bad doctor. This is generally recognised; and the love of the familiar in so far as it affects medicine or natural science, does so as an unavowed and discredited motive. Ostensibly the conservative and progressive tendencies are harmonised in these regions of human activity.

The case of the fine arts and of literature is very different. Experimental research is certainly not the secret of progress here. But it is not easy to say what is. Rather it is impossible. Progress in literature and art

depends on those elusive qualities which we call taste, talent and genius. But these words express only vague ideas. We none of us know what taste and genius are, though we think we can recognise them when we see them. Even of talent our notion is not very definite. And we are still more in the dark as to how either taste, talent or genius are produced. They appear or they are wanting; and with their presence or absence artistic and literary progress flows or ebbs. We cannot tell why. We cannot cause them; we cannot even foresee them. They are to us a sort of psychical weather, bad or fine as it may happen, but always beyond our control. There is thus no steady movement as there is in natural science. So much depends on the individual artist or writer and dies with him; so much again on the level of taste in a particular generation or period which soon passes away, that it would be bold to decide whether the world has or has not made progress in literature and art during those last four centuries in which scientific, social and political developments have transformed the lives of men. If artistic and literary progress thus escapes our scrutiny, we cannot well judge the effect of conservative tendencies upon it. But the dispositions to change or to preserve are not harmonised, as in science. From time to time their discords become

very apparent. When innovations appear in painting or music or poetry as they did in the nineteenth century, distrust of the unknown and love of the familiar are at once aroused; and critics appear who may correctly be, and sometimes are, described as conservative. Harmony is no more complete in these matters between conservatism and progressivism than in politics. But the uncertain, temporary and precarious character of artistic and literary progress extends to the controlling conservatism, and distinguishes both from their political parallels.

In the region of historical and critical research and to some extent in that of mental philosophy, the conditions of progress more nearly resemble those prevailing in politics. To harmonise progressive and conservative tendencies is as necessary and as difficult. Progress cannot be tested and assured by experiment; but progress is not so precariously dependent on the personal qualities of individuals which perish with them, as in literature or art. It is more continuous, and there is a more constant interaction of conservative and progressive motives. But in these matters, as in politics, a very large part is played by complicating motives and tendencies, which combine with or influence the simple conservative and progressive dispositions, but are not themselves distinctively

conservative or progressive. The most important of these are the attraction and repulsion caused by Christianity. Distrust of the unknown takes the form of fearing possible support for heterodox opinions, or may even be superseded by dislike of known heterodox consequences. This most commonly operates for conserving existing conclusions which experience shows to be compatible with Christian belief. But if at any stage the theory thought favourable to heterodoxy has become recognised, it is the orthodox who are ready to welcome innovation and become for the nonce the "advanced" party. They are in fact not under the influence of either a conservative or progressive disposition. They are anxious to prove a conclusion already independently reached. They are not real investigators. Like a student of one of Euclid's theorems they know the truth they seek to prove: they only want to be able to write "q. e. d." at the foot of the Christian Creed. And what is true of the lovers of Christianity is equally true of its haters. For the hatred of religion is as dominant a prepossession as its love. They too plunge into critical, historical or metaphysical studies to demonstrate and not to discover. The effect on progress in the search for truth it is not within my present purpose to consider. But it is instructive to note the

complication introduced into the operation of what may be called the pure conservative and progressive motives.

It is instructive because political Conservatism (which is my proper subject) is the result of more than one such complication. Political Conservatism is not the effect of purely conservative tendencies. It is an amalgam. Or rather it may be compared to a river, the waters of which come from many converging streams, though only one of them has been selected by geographers to bear the principal name, leaving the others to be accounted tributaries. To see this best, it will be convenient to make a brief historical survey of the course of political Conservatism, beginning, not indeed with its ultimate sources, for that, if possible, would be bewildering, but at a point sufficiently remote to enable us to notice the main currents which are now combined in what we call Conservatism.

CHAPTER II

THE SOURCES AND COURSE OF CONSERVATISM

It cannot, perhaps, be said that at any precise point in English History conservatism begins. As early as England has a history natural conservatism is found generally diffused. In the days of the Saxons, Normans and Plantagenets every one was a conservative: every one distrusted the unknown; every one loved the familiar. Progress was very gradual, and what there was invariably arrayed itself in the garments of conservatism. The claim of the barons against King John was that it was he that was the innovator who attacked the rights of his subjects, while Magna Charta merely formulated and affirmed the ancient laws and customs of the realm. This practice of representing constitutional change as though it were the preservation or restoration of some older and purer tradition has persisted right through our history and is to be observed in the controversies of the present time. And though it seems a childish and disingenuous pretence, it shows strikingly the strength of conservative

sentiment among the English that the best way to recommend a novelty to them is to make them believe that it is a revival. But if this sentiment is strong even now, it was overwhelming in mediæval times. Before the Reformation, therefore, it is impossible to distinguish conservatism in politics, not because there was none but because there was nothing else. Conservatism, like the Nile, rises from a lake, and from one of vast and undetermined size, the borders of which no eye can trace.

We begin to see conservatism as a distinct force when we approach the Reformation. As soon as the minds of men began to be affected by the movement they fell into categories which are familiar. There was the extreme revolutionary section. But this had little following and was generally reprobated. England then as now was an unfriendly soil for revolution; and the violent Anabaptists had as little hold as the Anarchists to-day. There was also an unbending Papal party who were against all concession; but these, though stronger than the revolutionaries, were yet a feeble minority. The two main sections of opinion were alike anxious for reform, and yet sincerely reverent for the faith and organisation of the Catholic Church. The conservatives like Sir Thomas More and the Duke of Norfolk were domi-

nantly more afraid of separation from the ancient fabric of the faith than desirous of change; while more progressive men like Cromwell and eventually Cranmer, threw themselves into the current for reform, and were carried by it far from the old beliefs. King Henry VIII played a part not unusual in movements of opinion. He attempted to use the cry for reform for his own purposes. He strove to strengthen the authority of the Crown at the expense of the Papacy without permitting any change in the general theological teaching of the Church. With great difficulty he succeeded in doing this during his lifetime. But the singular plan of making the Church neither Papal nor reformed did not survive him. In the reigns of Edward VI and Mary there was no such compromise. The full force of the reforming movement was felt and the reformers and their opponents contended over the whole field of the controversy. The conflict was indecisive, the violence of each side doing more for the other than either could achieve by direct effort. What we now call "the swing of the pendulum" was powerful. The two parties were under the influence of strong and conflicting religious beliefs. But the mass of the people appear to have been of that central disposition that is repelled by the violence of more convinced disputants and turns in

disgust from one side to the other. It was an opportunity for the moderate reformer. Elizabeth coming to the throne at the critical moment, and being by conviction and temperament just fitted for the task, made a new and more defensible compromise. She succeeded in controlling and limiting the Reformation, and her success governed the whole sequence of political history and is by no means without influence on the politics of to-day.

Like Henry, Elizabeth was not in complete sympathy with either of the contending religious parties. But her standpoint was less of a masterful idiosyncrasy than his, and more of a truly central position. Her sympathies cannot be called Protestant, yet circumstances made her the leader of the Protestant party and forced her to rely on the support of Protestants. She strove, therefore, to limit the Protestant movement as narrowly as she could while casting off the Papacy and resisting the King of Spain. She sought to preserve the Catholic faith and organisation in the Church, while rejecting the authority of the See of Rome. She was thus at issue both with the Papists and the more advanced Protestants. A typical conservative reformer, she had to fight on both sides. The Papist she firmly withstood; to the Puritan she conceded as little as she dared. She fought the Papists with the full support of her

Parliament and the Puritans mainly by her ecclesiastical supremacy. By the vigorous and sometimes cruel exercise of her power, she suppressed the Papists, and yet held the Church to what she conceived to be Catholic truth, in spite of all the efforts of the growing strength of the Puritan party. This became increasingly difficult when the action of the Pope forced the Papists to secede from the Church and to become rebels against the royal authority. Discredited as treasonable friends of the Pope and Spain, they lost influence; and Elizabeth had to resist the Puritans by her mere authority without much independent moral support. Nevertheless she held her ground and in the main prevailed. The most extreme Puritans seceded and began Nonconformity, while the Protestant movement made no further permanent progress within the Church. Elizabeth had thus forced the Church along the central path she had chosen. But this great achievement placed the Church in a situation of peril. It was brought into conflict with a formidable and increasing party, to which flowed all the strength of the reforming movement. In this conflict the Church was obliged mainly to depend for success on the power of the Throne. The Throne was patron : the Church client. It naturally followed that the Church exalted the protecting Throne; while the

Throne enforced by harsh penalties conformity to the Church. The contest began under Elizabeth and continued with increasing bitterness till it culminated in the Great Rebellion. Then Puritanism overthrew both Church and Throne. But its success destroyed it; and Church and Throne came back together more closely united than ever, and supported by a well-marked body of opinion, which had grown up during the long contest in opposition to the reforming Puritans. This was the Church and King party or the "Tories," as twenty years after the Restoration they came to be called. Henceforth Toryism was one of the political forces at work, one of the streams of influence that are now joined in Conservatism.

The Tories were essentially a Church party. Even the King had the second place in their regard. This was proved when James II forced them to choose between him and the Church. So soon as it became clear that the King was resolved to overthrow the Church and re-introduce Popery, the great mass of Tories either actively aided or at least passively acquiesced in the Revolution. Their attitude was decisive and James was overthrown; but when he was deposed a large section of Tories began to repent. The long alliance of Church and King had created a system of thought and teaching which

forced the supporters of the Church to adhere to the divine right of a legitimate hereditary king. Some Tories refused the oaths and became non-jurors and Jacobites; others accepted the new sovereigns shamefacedly and with discredit. The price was now to be paid for the policy of Elizabeth. She had kept the Church anti-puritan by the royal power and so made it dependent on the Throne. Church and King thus united fought a hard battle for a hundred years; and while they fought and fell and rose again, the dominant anti-puritan Churchmen had become more and more convinced that the kings who led them against their enemies ruled by divine right. This was the position of the Tories when in the last years of Charles II they completely triumphed. But James II, by throwing over the Church and exalting Popery, for the time destroyed the basis of Toryism. The Tories in their fury dragged him down, only to find themselves divided and discredited—tainted alternatively with treason or with inconsistency, agonisingly vacillating between a Calvinist King *de facto* and a Popish King *de jure*, between William who used the legal powers of the Crown to make the Church Latitudinarian and James who wanted to use much more than the legal powers of the Crown to make the Church Popish. Under this strain they broke into sections juring and

non-juring: the jurors losing credit by deserting their old principles of legitimacy and Divine Right, the non-jurors becoming more or less infected by rebellious conspiracy and the atmosphere of intrigue and violence that surrounds it. For a time the Tory Party did not utterly collapse. William was reluctant to hand himself altogether over to the Whigs and showed the Tories, especially at first, a large measure of countenance. And under Queen Anne there was a Tory revival: for she was herself a typical Tory in her devotion to the Church. But the fatal dilemma still confronted Tories. Either they must run the risks of treason and get for their trouble only after all, a Popish King; or they must give up their old traditional principles of legitimacy and submit to a German Lutheran utterly out of sympathy with their Church With the accession of George I Toryism was eclipsed for half a century; but it did not perish altogether. It remained an element in the national life, insignificant for the time as a formally organised party, but still an influence in affairs and capable of effective revival.

Those influences, which in the more strict sense must be called conservative, meantime had played a different part in the struggles of the Reformation and the Rebellion. Conservatism was diffused rather then organised

into any separate party during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But Elizabeth herself, though her policy led to the development of Toryism, was rather a conservative than a Tory. She had a dislike for innovation rather than a desire to exalt the Church. James I and Charles I on the other hand were Tories. They stood for the ascendency of Church and King. They had little support from conservative feeling and seemed to lawyers and even to country gentlemen to be innovating on the ancient Constitution. Hyde and Falkland occupied a position distinctively conservative, opposed to the innovations of Strafford and Laud on the one side, and the violence of the Parliamentary leaders upon the other. The effect of the Great Rebellion and the profound discontent excited by the domination of the army was to drive conservatism over to the Tory side. The Restoration in 1660 was a triumph of conservatism. It was not more a restoration of the Monarchy than a general rejection of Puritanism and military tyranny, and all novelties in Church and State, in favour of the familiar forms of the ancient Constitution. And it is not too much to say that from that time onwards until the French Revolution introduced a new scene, conservatism was absolutely dominant in England. But, as already said, it remained diffused, not organised in any

particular party. The Trimmers are the nearest approach to a strictly conservative party that can be found until modern times. But they were insignificant in numbers and their influence was practically confined to that of one man, Lord Halifax. The power of conservatism went far further afield in the reigns of Charles II and James II. It permeated both the Whig and the Tory ranks, who found a common basis for their disputes in the desire to keep the Constitution in all its main outlines as it was. There was indeed a desire for some changes in both parties, but it was quite subordinate. The Tories wished to increase the power of the Crown until that power sided with Popery. The Whigs resisted that increase and sought progress rather in protecting the rights of the subject and of Parliament. But both dreaded anything like fundamental innovation. After the Revolution the Whig Party plays a great and important part in English History, but it is exceedingly difficult to state its principles in abstract form. Certainly it was little less conservative than were the Tories. There was no question in either party of extensive reforms. And when the Whigs had established the new Monarchy on a basis which made it conform to the principles they had always maintained, their opposition to the royal power passed away. Except for factious

passions and personal ambitions they ceased to have strongly animating motives for political action. There remained to them indeed the duty of resisting the Jacobites, but as time went on, and especially after the rebellion of 1745, this was a purpose insufficient for the healthy life of a political party. Both Tories and Whigs were therefore at their lowest ebb, though in different senses and from different causes, at the accession of George III.

George III has, perhaps, received too hard measure at the hands of historians. They have tried him by a standard to which he made no attempt to conform, and they have given inadequate attention to his real qualities and achievements. He was not a constitutional monarch of the modern type, of which Queen Victoria is the greatest example, nor was he a king of the older type, a personal ruler who governed as well as reigned. That sort of monarch came to an end with the death of Queen Anne, if not with the death of William III. Neither was George III a foreigner playing a rather ignominious part in the mechanism by which the Whigs kept out the House of Stuart, like his grandfather and great-grandfather. He was what, so far as I know, no other king of this country has ever been; he was a party leader. If we are to do him justice we must compare him, not

with William III nor with Queen Victoria, but with Sir Robert Peel or Lord Beaconsfield. He was a party leader, and like all party leaders by no means always successful. But if his whole career be viewed together it must be admitted to rank high in the annals of party leadership. He revived the Tory Party on what was essentially its old basis of defence of Church and King, although the emphasis was now rather on the King than on the Church. With a patience and dexterity which neither Peel nor Beaconsfield have surpassed, he raised the party to power, nominally under Lord North but really under himself. The disastrous failure in the American War overthrew him for the moment, but the coalition between Fox and North gave him a second opportunity, and by uniting himself with Pitt, whom we may call a dissentient Whig, he achieved a second and more lasting success. Only in this second period of power he was not the chief leader of the party. He submitted to the leadership of Pitt, although retaining a position of great influence and authority in the party councils. Viewed in this way the career of George III is more intelligible, more interesting and more admirable than if we judge him as a king like other kings. The work that he performed was neither slight nor unimportant, for it may be presumed that the whole course of

English politics would have been different, if the party of Fox had been dominant when the French Revolution changed the face of political controversy.

Before we begin to consider the influence of the French Revolution, one other element which plays a part in the modern Conservative Party must be traced in its remoter history. Apart from pure conservatism, and apart from Toryism, there is now a third influence in the Conservative Party which lacks a satisfactory name, but the power of which is matter of common remark. It is sometimes called Imperialism and sometimes Jingoism, or it is described by a periphrasis as "support of a vigorous foreign policy" or as "a strong interest in imperial affairs." By this way of thinking men turn their eyes away from the domestic conflicts, whether they be between Whigs and Tories, between Church and Nonconformity, or between King and Parliament, to the part that the country as a whole can and ought to play in the affairs of the world. Sometimes this interest in the external influence and activity of the country originates in fear of foreign aggression and the necessity of making provision for national defence. But the sentiment, though doubtless in part originating in and strengthened by fear of attack, does not stop at defence. The strong sense of corporate personality which patriotism

evokes or expresses, as with the personality of an individual, seeks to assert itself, to enlarge the sphere of its activity, to guide and control the fate of others. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this feeling played upon the whole a subordinate part. The great conflicts of the Reformation and the Rebellion indisposed Englishmen to go much beyond national defence in their interest in foreign affairs. Under Elizabeth patriotic sentiment was concentrated on antagonism to Spain, and the parsimony of Elizabeth herself discouraged great armaments, and made for a foreign policy much less ambitious than many Protestants would have liked to see her adopt. So far as she could, she tried to escape from the postiion of the Protestant leader in Europe and to keep English policy within the limits of the British Islands. Interference in Scotland and defence against Spain were the main purposes of her foreign policy. Scotland ceased to be foreign with the union of the Crowns under James, and the conflict with his Parliament prevented him from taking much part in the great struggle of the Thirty Years' War. The same cause confined Charles still more strictly to English affairs. Cromwell revived the policy of interference abroad and, more really than any one since Henry VIII pursued the ideals of what we should now call imperialism. But

the very circumstance that Cromwell followed an active foreign policy, like the circumstance that he organised a great standing army, alienated English opinion from both. The Tories especially viewed with distrust anything which involved a large army. To defend the shores of England against invasion was all that they aspired to do, and they put their reliance for defence mainly on the navy. Fear of the predominant power of France gradually drove English opinion in the direction of more armaments and a more active foreign policy. But even after 1688 William III, whose whole heart was in the European struggle, and to whom the English Throne was mainly valuable as an instrument for defeating Louis XIV, found it difficult to carry his Parliament and his people with him in his vigorous assertion of English power on the Continent. The Whigs, however, in the main supported his views, and the tradition of a spirited foreign policy began from his initiative as part of the Whig stock-in-trade. The Tory Government of the closing years of Queen Anne was what we should now call a "Little England" Government; and the Tory revival under George III was marked by the overthrow of the elder Pitt and the unwise concessions of the Treaty of Paris. Pitt himself, who is the next to William in succession as a great imperialist, was a Whig. Nor can

it be said that George III's obstinate insistence on the right of Parliament to tax the American colonies was even a defective and unintelligent imperialism. It was rather the arbitrary resolve to enforce the authority of the Crown which naturally went with a general desire to exalt kingly power. The younger Pitt, though as a financier sincerely anxious for peace, inherited sufficient of his father's tradition to make his foreign policy a vigorous and active one, though often marked by little skill. This side of his political influence was no doubt emphasised by the circumstance that Fox was vehemently opposed to an active foreign policy. Probably it is due to the rivalry of Pitt and Fox that imperialism has become part of the creed of the modern Conservative Party.

I have traced the elements out of which modern Conservatism was formed, up to the time when they coalesced together and made what we know as such. But what brought Conservatism into existence was the French Revolution. Natural conservatism, Toryism, imperialism, influenced particular statesmen or were diffused throughout the mind of the community, but until 1790 there was not a definite Conservative Party nor even anything resembling a consciously held body of Conservative doctrine. The name itself was not indeed invented till forty years later; but

from 1790 the whole of English politics was cut in two by the influence of the French Revolution and its principles; and those who stood emphatically against the revolutionary movement made the party in politics which we now call Conservative. Two men had a conspicuous influence in creating and leading the Conservative movement: one was Pitt and the other was Burke. Pitt was the practical leader who headed the opposition to the French Revolution and behind whom the Toryism of George III, the natural conservatism of Burke, the zeal for the imperial greatness of the country, of which he himself was the best exponent, coalesced together and found their sphere of activity in resisting revolutionary France as the enemy of Church and King, the destroyer of all that was ordered and settled, the formidable enemy of the greatness and even the safety of England. And in Burke Conservatism found its first and perhaps its greatest teacher, who poured forth with extraordinary rhetorical power the language of an anti-revolutionary faith, and gave to the Conservative movement the dignity of a philosophical creed and the fervour of a religious crusade.

Burke is commonly regarded as a Whig and Pitt as a Tory, but this is really a serious misapprehension. Burke was a conservative all his life. In his early years he was a Whig

opposed to the growing power of the Crown. But like Clarendon before him, while remaining a conservative, he was driven by the French Revolution from the Whig to the Tory side; and from the publication of the *Reflections* he must be reckoned not a Whig but a Tory. It is true that he himself vehemently resented this accusation, and claimed to be a Whig. No doubt this claim was unanswerable in so far as it meant that the French Revolution would have been as abhorrent to the old Whigs of 1688 as it was to Burke. But that is only to say that the old Whigs would, like Burke, have become Tories in face of the French Revolution. The essential characteristic of a Tory is that in controversies relating to Church and King he takes the royal and ecclesiastical side. Up to 1790 in so far as the positions of the Throne and Church were in controversy at all, Burke rather attacked than defended them; but after 1790 he was uniformly on the side of Church and King.

Pitt on the other hand moved much less under the stress of the conflict with French principles than Burke did. He had not been so strong a Whig as Burke: he did not become so strong a Tory. Perhaps the true way to state the matter is that Pitt was always less of a conservative than Burke, and that when Burke moved from Whiggism to Toryism, the conservatism which had always been his

dominant political conviction added to the vehemence of his Toryism; whereas Pitt, who in many respects was disposed to favour constitutional reform, adopted the anti-revolutionary position more temperately and with more reserve. Burke's conservatism was in truth an unbridled passion. It drove him, in his opposition to George III over the American War, to an odious degree of sympathy with the enemies of his country. It drove him, in his horror at the principles of revolutionary France, into the brilliant extravagance of his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. He was never an imperialist. Though not usually unpatriotic, to him the causes of liberty and order were immensely more interesting than the greatness and power of his country. He was the friend of America because he believed the American cause was the cause of liberty: he was the enemy of France because he believed the cause of France to be the cause of anarchy and irreligion. Pitt on the other hand had uniformly a high conception of the greatness of his country abroad; and while by inclination pacific, he was always ready to assert her authority with spirit and courage. It was under the influence of these two men that Conservatism in its modern sense came into being.

It is picturesque and not untrue to fix a particular day as the birthday of Conservatism.

On the 6th of May, 1790, the House of Commons went into Committee on a Bill, called the Quebec Bill, establishing a constitution in Canada; and upon a question which in the procedure of those times was customary, "that the Bill be read clause by clause," Burke rose and began an elaborate speech on the affairs of France. It was not unnaturally complained that this on such a question was out of order, and according to the practice of the times after some discussion Lord Sheffield moved a motion that "dissertations on the French Constitution, and to read a narrative of transactions in France, are not regular or orderly on the question before the House." Burke was, no doubt, irritated, as any one who has spoken in Parliament can easily understand, by interference which hindered him from making a carefully prepared speech in which he was deeply interested, and felt we may suppose that his great position and talents ought to entitle him to wide indulgence. When therefore Fox reiterated on the motion of order his favourable views of the French Revolution and criticised the consistency of Burke's attitude with some of his previous declarations, a memorable explosion followed. Burke, with much emotion and bitterness complained of the way he had been treated, accused Fox of unkindness and cruelty, and declaring that though unsupported by one

side of the House and disavowed and dishonoured by the other, he had yet done his duty and would be a willing victim to the good of his country, he cast aside the friendship of Fox and all co-operation with his party. This violent rupture of personal relations as intimate and affectionate as have ever united political friends, marked the power of the currents of opinion that were now flowing. Henceforth it was clear that the true division of English politics, a division deep enough to sever friends, would relate to the new French principles. Men must henceforth stand for or against the movement of which the French Revolution was the first and most tremendous expression, and with the cry of Burke that he had sacrificed private friendship to the safety of his country, Conservatism may be said to have been born.

CHAPTER III

BURKE AND MODERN CONSERVATISM

THE *Reflections on the French Revolution* is a book not so much read now as it deserves to be. The reasons for its comparative neglect are indeed easy to understand. The main theme of the book is to condemn the French Revolution according to the standard of political wisdom and justice which was generally accepted in England at and after the English Revolution of 1688. That the French Revolution was, according to this standard, altogether unjustifiable, is beyond dispute: it is indeed too obvious to be worth argument. And it is not to the modern reader a very interesting proposition. He is quite ready to blame the French in 1789, but not because they acted on different principles from the great Whig and Tory statesmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Burke's standpoint is therefore obsolete, and the hasty reader is tempted to set his book aside as altogether out of date. Nor is this antiquated standpoint the only fault. Burke was imperfectly informed on the social side of the French

Revolution. Yet this is precisely its best aspect. Looking back from the distance of time to which we have now reached, the good that was ultimately achieved, by whatever methods, in reforming the abuses of the land system and of the fiscal system, seems to deserve more weight as an extenuation of the manifold follies and crimes which marked the purely political changes of the Revolution, than Burke was able to recognise. Finally, the arrangement of the book is by no means clear or attractive. Much space is occupied with matters of detail which have ceased to be interesting, and the style, though of extraordinary power and beauty in its own vein, is of a kind which is not now fashionable.

Yet when all fair criticism has been allowed for, the merits of the book must be admitted to be very great. It is true that it does not interest us much now to have the follies of the National Assembly pointed out. But no one can fairly doubt that on all the main lines of the criticism Burke was right and the French constitution-makers wrong. He was right in believing that they had put the King in a position which was intolerable to him and dangerous to the State; he was right in thinking that the confiscation of Church lands was flagrantly unjust and did not even sensibly improve the financial situation; he was right in attacking the folly of

issuing assignats; he was right in condemning the civil constitution of the clergy; he was right in denouncing the events of the 5th of October as much more than a casual outburst of disorder, as being the expression of principles which were utterly destructive of both order and liberty; he was right in foreseeing that the levelling of all existing institutions would but pave the way for a despotic government. When it is remembered that he wrote in 1790, long before the Reign of Terror or the Napoleonic Empire, his political insight seems marvellous. But it is not mainly on the penetrating rightness of his censures on the Revolution of 1789 that the permanent value of his book depends. The modern reader is not much concerned with seeing the French Revolution triumphantly convicted of folly, injustice and anarchic cruelty. Those evils are past. Their story is almost like the report of a bygone criminal trial. We are not much moved even by the ablest speech for the prosecution. But Burke resembled the heroine of the fairy tale, who could not open her lips without dropping out precious jewels. In the course of his attack he is constantly digressing into general disquisitions of deep and permanent interest; and it is for the sake of these that his *Reflections* ought to be read by all students of politics. For our present purpose it will be well to call attention to six

main themes expounded in the *Reflections* which permanently underlie Conservative thought, and are as full of interest to-day as they were when Burke wrote.

In the first place Burke insisted on the importance of religion and the value of its recognition by the State. Secondly, he hated and denounced with his whole heart injustice to individuals committed in the course of political or social reform. Thirdly, he attacked the revolutionary conception of equality, and maintained the reality and necessity of the distinctions of rank and station. Fourthly, he upheld private property as an institution sacred in itself and vital to the well-being of society. Fifthly, he regarded human society rather as an organism than a mechanism, and an organism about which there is much that is mysterious. Sixthly, in close connection with this sense of the organic character of society, he urged the necessity of keeping continuity with the past and making changes as gradually and with as slight a dislocation as possible.

I will venture to quote some passages from the *Reflections* which express Burke's teaching on these points, because the book itself is now so seldom read that it seems desirable to give here his own words. On the value and importance of religion to the national life there is much that deserves to be read.

Except the insults to the King and Queen, nothing moved Burke to more indignation in the French Revolution than the attitude of the National Assembly towards the Church and religion. It offended him not only as a Christian, but as a statesman and student of political science.

"We know," he said, "and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal: that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot prevail long." And then a little further on:-

"I beg leave to speak of our church establishment, which is the first of our prejudices; not a prejudice destitute of reason, but involving in it profound and extensive wisdom. I speak of it first. It is first, and last, and midst in our minds. For, taking ground on that religious system, of which we are now in possession, we continue to act on the early received and uniformly continued sense of mankind. That sense not only, like a wise architect, hath built up the august fabric of states, but, like a provident proprietor, to preserve the structure from profanation and ruin, as a sacred temple, purged from all the impurities of fraud, and violence, and injustice, and tyranny, hath solemnly and for ever consecrated the commonwealth, and all that officiate in it. This consecration is made,

that all who administer in the government of men, in which they stand in the person of God himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and destination; that their hope should be full of immortality; that they should not look to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the temporary and transient praise of the vulgar, but to a solid, permanent existence, in the permanent part of their nature, and to a permanent fame and glory, in the example they leave as a rich inheritance to the world.

"Such sublime principles ought to be infused into persons of exalted situations; and religious establishments provided, that may continually revive and enforce them."

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"This consecration of the state, by a state religious establishment, is necessary also to operate with a wholesome awe upon free citizens; because, in order to secure their freedom, they must enjoy some determinate portion of power. . . . All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust; and that they are to account for their conduct in that trust to the one great master, author, and founder of society."

And he insisted strongly on the special importance of religion where the government was democratic:—

"This principle ought even to be more strongly impressed upon the minds of those who compose the collective sovereignty than upon those of single princes. . . . the people at large can never become the subject of punishment by any human hand. . . . They ought to be persuaded that they are full as little entitled, and far less qualified, with safety to themselves, to use any arbitrary power whatsoever; that therefore they are not, under a false show of liberty, but, in truth, to exercise an unnatural inverted domination, tyrannically to exact, from those who officiate in the state, not an entire devotion to their interest, which is their right, but an abject submission to their occasional will; extinguishing thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgment, and all consistency of character, whilst by the very same process they give themselves up a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants or courtly flatterers.

"When the people have emptied themselves of all the lust of selfish will, which without religion it is utterly impossible they ever should, when they are conscious that they exercise, and exercise perhaps in a higher link of the order of delegation, the power, which to be legitimate must be according to

that eternal immutable law, in which will and reason are the same, they will be more careful how they place power in base and incapable hands. In their nomination to office, they will not appoint to the exercise of authority, as to a pitiful job, but as to a holy function; not according to their sordid selfish interest, nor to their wanton caprice, nor to their arbitrary will; but they will confer that power (which any man may well tremble to give or to receive) on those only, in whom they may discern that predominant proportion of active virtue and wisdom, taken together and fitted to the charge, such, as in the great and inevitable mixed mass of human imperfections and infirmities, is to be found."

The attack on the Church was not less offensive to Burke's sense of justice and of the sanctity of property than to his conviction of the social and political value of religion:—

"When once the commonwealth has established the estates of the church as property, it can, consistently, hear nothing of the more or the less. Too much and too little are treason against property."

And further on:—

". . . The robbery of your church has proved a security to the possessions of ours. It has roused the people. They see with horror and alarm that enormous and shameless act of proscription. It has opened, and will

more and more open their eyes upon the selfish enlargement of mind, and the narrow liberality of sentiment of insidious men, which commencing in close hypocrisy and fraud have ended in open violence and rapine. At home we behold similar beginnings. We are on our guard against similar conclusions.

"I hope we shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed upon us by the law of social union, as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen. Who but a tyrant (a name expressive of everything which can vitiate and degrade human nature) could think of seizing on the property of men, unaccused, unheard, untried, by whole descriptions, by hundreds and thousands together? who that had not lost every trace of humanity could think of casting down men of exalted rank and sacred function, some of them of an age to call at once for reverence and compassion—of casting them down from the highest situation in the commonwealth, wherein they were maintained by their own landed property, to a state of indigence, depression and contempt."

Burke was, it will be seen, acutely conscious of the fallacy of treating the confiscation of property on political grounds as though it were ethically distinct from the penal infliction of a pecuniary fine. In this matter he rightly

thought that the sense of England was on his side. It may be doubted whether his teaching on the reality of distinctions of rank is equally acceptable to us at the present time. The passage may be quoted, however, as the most brilliant illustration of his eloquence, and as expressing his teaching that the state must correspond to the complexity of our moral nature and has in it an element which lies outside the sphere of a merely rationalistic analysis. This sense that the state is a mysterious organism may be almost called the keynote of Burke's political philosophy.

"It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in; glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution, and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant

men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult.—But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

"This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in."

. . . . . .

"But now all is to be changed. All the

pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonised the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

"On this scheme of things, a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal: and an animal not of the highest order. . . .

"On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every visto, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections

on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons; so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law."

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"There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely."

. . . . . .

"Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilisation, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilisation, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion."

Earlier in the *Reflections* Burke had dwelt at length on the importance of institutions gradually growing up and so corresponding with human nature in all the mysteries of its growth. This, he said, had been the case in England:—

"You will observe, that from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and an house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors.

"This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free; but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims, are locked fast as in a sort of

family settlement; grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner and on those principles to our forefathers, we are guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up

the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars."

And at the end of his book he returns to the same theme:—

"Whatever they are, I wish my countrymen rather to recommend to our neighbours the example of the British constitution, than to take models from them for the improvement of our own. In the former they have got an invaluable treasure. They are not, I think, without some causes of apprehension and complaint; but these they do not owe to their constitution, but to their own conduct. I think our happy situation owing to our constitution; but owing to the whole of it, and not to any part singly; owing in a great measure to what we have left standing in our several reviews and reformations, as well as to what we have altered or superadded. Our people will find employment enough for a truly patriotic, free, and independent spirit, in guarding what they possess, from violation. I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be to preserve. I should be led to my remedy by a great grievance. In what I did, I should follow the

example of our ancestors. I would make the reparation as nearly as possible in the style of the building. A politic caution, a guarded circumspection, a moral rather than a complexional timidity, were among the ruling principles of our forefathers in their most decided conduct. Not being illuminated with the light of which the gentlemen of France tell us they have got so abundant a share, they acted under a strong impression of the ignorance and fallibility of mankind. He that had made them thus fallible, rewarded them for having in their conduct attended to their nature. Let us imitate their caution, if we wish to deserve their fortune, or to retain their bequests. Let us add, if we please; but let us preserve what they have left; and, standing on the firm ground of the British constitution, let us be satisfied to admire rather than attempt to follow in their desperate flights the aeronauts of France."

These extracts give only an imperfect idea of the full value of the *Reflections;* but they are sufficient to show that Burke outlined the main principles which even to the present day form the intellectual basis of the opposition to Jacobinism offered by Tory and conservative minds in Great Britain. It would be possible to go further and say that Burke expressed the whole faith of modern Conservatism, if it were not that

the imperialist side of Conservative policy finds no place in his writings. As already observed, Burke was always a conservative and became a Tory, but was not an imperialist. The bias towards imperialism which has so powerfully affected the Conservative Party arose equally from opposition to the French Revolution, but came incidentally as what may be called a by-product of the struggle, rather than as part of the conscious opposition to Jacobinical principles. The fact that resistance to the Revolution meant war; that the war developed into the greatest struggle in which our country has ever been engaged; and that the Whig Party under the influence of Fox were at first opponents, and throughout the struggle dissatisfied critics, of the war, identified the Conservative Party with upholding the greatness and power of England in external affairs. Up to that time the Tory tradition had not been imperialist. William III, Lord Chatham, and, at the outset of his career, the younger Pitt, were none of them Tories; but Pitt, becoming the Tory leader under the stress of the revolutionary struggle, carried his new party with him and made it, not for the time only but for the century that was to follow, an imperialist party.

There was indeed a short period during which the Whigs took the lead in imperial

policy under the leadership of Lord Palmerston. But the Conservative Party did not abandon its imperialist position under the stress of partisan sentiment. On the contrary, Palmerston drew a large measure of parliamentary support for his foreign policy from the Conservative side. And in the subsequent struggle between Disraeli and Gladstone, imperialism became almost wholly Conservative: for Gladstone, with much sympathy both for the Tory and the conservative point of view, was vigorously opposed to imperialism. But after 1815, it was not till the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the imperialist controversy played much part in English politics. The earlier part of the century was occupied with conflicts in which conservative and Tory feeling were the dominant forces in Conservatism.

It is most easy to review the party struggles of the last hundred years by noting that they hinge on six great events, five of them disastrous to the Conservative, and one to the Liberal Party. The two last fall too near our own day to make it convenient to discuss them :—these are the Home Rule conflict of 1886–1895, the only great disaster to Liberalism, and the Fiscal controversy which began in 1903. But the other four may briefly be mentioned. These were the long controversy about Roman Catholic Emancipa-

tion which ended in 1829, the passing of the Reform Bill in 1831–32, the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and the enacting of Household Suffrage in 1867.

It is matter for regret that Pitt did not succeed in inspiring the Conservative Party (for so I will call it, though the name was not adopted till 1835), of which he was the first leader, not only with his imperialist but also with his reforming opinions. For it is an indispensable part of the effective resistance to Jacobinism that there should be moderate reform on conservative lines. Burke, in a sentence I have quoted which might serve as a motto for Conservatism, recognised this: "I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be preserve." Unfortunately the Conservative leaders who followed Pitt, with the exception of Canning, were insensible to the necessity of changing in order to preserve. In the great convulsion of the war, and even in the years of acute distress that immediately followed the war, something may reasonably be said in defence of an unbending rejection of all change. But as time went on and the movement against Jacobinism lost its strength, the unyielding attitude of the Conservatives led to a series of disasters. In respect to Roman Catholic Emancipation, to Parliamentary Reform, and perhaps also to the repeal of

the Corn Laws, resistance was maintained until the last moment, and the change made with something of a shock. It is true that in the case of Emancipation and of the Corn Laws it was Peel, the Conservative leader, who actually carried the change. But this rather aggravated than diminished the mischief of the prolonged resistance and final collapse. A flavour of something approaching betrayal was added to what would in any case have been a disastrous and dislocating change. But even apart from this element of betrayal, a large share of the blame of the dislocating shocks which marked these three great reforms must be borne by the Conservative Party. In the case of Roman Catholic Emancipation the fault was simply one of delay. In the case of Parliamentary Reform and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the error was rather of refusing to attempt to do gradually what was ultimately done by the violent demolition of the older system. Nothing could be further from Burke's principle of preservative change, "the reparation as nearly as possible in the style of the building," than the Reform Bill and the abolition of the Corn Laws.

I purposely couple these two measures together, for they were two aspects of the same great change that was made in our institutions in the first part of the nineteenth

century. The Reform Bill was the destruction of the political power of the landed interest; the Repeal of the Corn Laws was the withdrawal of the special economic privileges which, in recognition of the peculiar importance which was thought to attach to those owning or cultivating land, had been allowed to the same interest. It is to miss the point of the battle over the Corn Laws to think of it only or mainly as a controversy between free trade and protection. So far as economic theory goes, Peel had already adopted free trade while he was still a defender of the Corn Laws; and in this he was only treading in the footsteps of Huskisson. But until 1846 Conservative statesmen, and not least among them Sir Robert Peel himself, had been accustomed to argue that the landed interest stood in a peculiar position, and that it was necessary to give it special protection against the danger of foreign competition. The Repeal of the Corn Laws was the defeat of this claim for special treatment. It was the economic counterpart of the Reform Bill and the consequent domination of the manufacturing and middle classes. This supersession of the land-owning class was doubtless inevitable, and it would have been wiser if the Conservative Party had allowed the change to be made more gradually and with greater safeguards against the dangers

that the transformation involved. Had the defects of the representative system been dealt with piecemeal, the more scandalous boroughs being gradually disfranchised and the large towns gradually admitted to representation, it is probable that the dangerous crisis of 1832 would have been avoided and the injury—in some respects the lasting injury—to the strength of the Conservative Party which its defeat then involved (such as, for example, the permanent alienation of Scotland) would not have occurred. Similarly, if the Conservatives had been willing to undertake the reduction of the duties on corn before the crisis of 1845 made the question dangerously acute, the fiscal change might have been spread over a great many years and might have been associated with a corresponding reform in local taxation, by which land would have shared with other forms of property the heavy burden of the rates. Lastly and most conspicuously, if the Roman Catholics of Ireland had been emancipated before the agitation of O'Connell, they would probably have accepted the legislative union, the cry of repeal would never have been raised, we should not have heard of Home Rule, and the natural conservatism of Roman Catholicism would have made the southern Irish a steadying, instead of an uneasy element in the politics of the United Kingdom.

A large part of the blame of these errors lies with Sir Robert Peel. Peel was an example of the mistake of supposing that even the highest practical abilities are sufficient, without philosophical instinct, to save a politician from grave errors. As a practical statesman Peel was pre-eminent. He was a great administrator and as a leader and manager of the House of Commons has never been surpassed. He was the type of that temperament which makes institutions work, which carries on the government of a great country, and uses the investigations of the student and the disquisitions of the philosopher rather as instruments to fight the battles of debate than as guides to trace the path of statesmanship. Just as Burke was the theoretic philosopher, so Peel was emphatically the practical man. The consequence was that Peel was much more led by the sense of his own capacity to carry on administration than by any abstract principle. As long as Ireland could be governed without granting Emancipation, he resisted it. As long as he could work the fiscal administration of the country without repealing the Corn Laws, he defended them. But the conversion to which no abstract argument could lead him was at once effected by the logic of fact. An impending civil war in Ireland, an actual famine there did what no reflections on

religious liberty or free trade would ever have done. But the weakness of the purely practical mind is that while it clearly sees the actual existing circumstances of the case, it has small power of foresight. Resistance was therefore kept up until facts compelled concession, until, that is to say, the mischief done by resistance had already come into being. And the same practical mind which could not look ahead saw imperfectly the moral shock which was caused by carrying through the very policy that it had always opposed. For consistency is a virtue that grows best in a mind trained to value the intellectual coherence of a sound political theory. It is, indeed, the peculiar merit of practical men that they are opportunists; that they are indifferent whether or not what they do to-day falls into the same category of political thought as what they did yesterday, so long as both yesterday and to-day they succeed in the object they have in view. But the opportunist must not forget that politics are conducted by conflicts in which all sorts of moral passions are roused and moral connections formed, and that it is not sufficient for a party leader to suit his means to his ends like an engineer. He must also be a teacher of disciples, a chieftain of clansmen, who excites, and must deserve, the loyalty of the heart. It was in this that Peel failed, and his

want of foresight and of external consistency did more harm to Conservatism than all the good that was wrought by his supreme practical ability.

The place of Peel in the Conservative Party was taken by Derby and Disraeli, and it was under their guidance that a fourth great shock was inflicted on Conservatism. The adoption of Household Suffrage in 1867 involved a loss of credit scarcely less than was the consequence of the Repeal of the Corn Laws. But the motives and character of Disraeli were as different from those of Peel as human motives and character could well be. Disraeli, so far from lacking foresight, had a penetrating power of judging what were the dominant tendencies and movements of his time and whither they were likely to lead. He was quite as much a man of theory as he was a practical tactician. The error of 1867 was not that he was blind to the nature of the movement towards democracy nor that he pressed resistance to it too obstinately, but on the contrary that in defiance of the previous attitude and old traditions of his party, he hurried forward an extension of the franchise before public opinion required it and to the scandal of Conservative sentiment. He was too quick where Peel had been too slow. He foresaw the ultimate establishment of a democratic

system: he rated too low the moral disaster that was involved in Conservatives outrunning reformers and "dishing the Whigs." He was thus led to a mischievous inconsistency by almost the opposite considerations to those that had tempted Peel. The disasters of the elections of 1868 and 1880 were undoubtedly the consequence of the long step towards democracy which he had induced the country to take. Nor can the intervening success of 1874 be regarded as a compensation. Unlike the elections of 1886 and 1895, the result was to defeat but not to demoralise the Liberal Party. Neither the Tory nor the conservative nor the imperialist interests in Conservatism gained in 1874 anything sufficient to compensate them for the injuries that were inflicted by Gladstone in his first and second administrations.

We are now approaching too near the controversies of contemporary politics to make it desirable in a book of this kind to proceed further in our historical survey. The student who looks at the century that has intervened between our day and the outbreak of the French Revolution will see, in the latter as in the earlier part of that period, the forces of Toryism, natural conservatism and imperialism at work within the Conservative Party. All through the century he will see the party contending in defence of the Church

and the religious well-being of the people; upholding the rights of property and the existing social order against innovation; reverencing the Crown and the Constitution and, so far as need arose, defending them. Less averse than the earlier Liberals from invoking the hand of authority, Conservatives outstripped their opponents in the endeavour to remedy the distresses of the poorer classes by legislation. Finally, the greatness and power of the country found in Conservatives, from the outbreak of the French War in 1793 to the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902, their consistent and successful champions.

In the remaining chapters of this book some of the more important controversies in which Conservatism plays a part will be considered. Exhaustive treatment of the very wide sphere which might be covered by such discussions is of course out of the question. No more than a slight sketch can be attempted, but it is hoped that even that superficial treatment will not be without interest to those who are anxious to gauge the value in contemporary politics of the part played by Conservatism.

PART II

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION AND POLITICS

In discussing the principles of Conservatism, as in all discussions of political principle, a preliminary question arises. Political principles must conform to some standard of right and wrong. Before we can even begin to consider how any particular rule of political conduct is to be laid down, we must have a clear view as to the standard by which it must be judged. This necessity is not always sufficiently borne in mind by writers on politics. It is not always made plain what is the ultimate foundation on which such writers base their political judgments. They often assume an ethical standpoint; they use language of praise or censure as though in their view ethical considerations were at stake; but they do not make clear what ethical standard they adopt, to what moral law they make appeal. The result is an impression on the reader of incompleteness and even sometimes of obscurity. He is not

always convinced of the moral soundness of the theories put forth, but he cannot test his misgivings because he does not know before what tribunal the author is pleading. It is desirable, therefore, to adopt in this book some definite criterion of moral judgment in order to give clearness and unity to the whole.

If any definite ethical standard is to be adopted it needs little argument to show that it must be that of Christian morals as revealed in the New Testament which must be chosen. This always has been and still is the position of all the different elements of which the modern Conservative Party is made up, and, indeed, of the vast majority of the people, to whatever political party they belong. It is true that in our time there is a disposition, not very definitely formulated but increasingly powerful, to claim a right to go behind the authority of the New Testament in morals, and to supersede it in favour of some other undefined standard. This tendency is not, however, yet sufficiently strong to make it needful or useful to consider it at length in this place. It is sufficient to say that wherever in these pages an ethical question is considered, wherever it is said or implied that any theory or course of conduct is morally right or wrong, appeal is always intended to the ethical teaching of the New Testament.

It must have struck every attentive reader

of the New Testament that its direct teaching in respect to matters of State is slight and even meagre. Neither in the Gospels nor in the Epistles do we read much about the State. The duty of obedience to the State is more than once enforced. The separation of spiritual and secular matters is taught in the memorable "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And throughout an example of patient submission even to oppression is prominent. But that is almost all. The direct teaching of the New Testament on political matters may be summed up in the statement: obedience is due to the authority of the State within its own sphere, but that sphere does not extend to purely spiritual matters.

This simple statement carries one no great distance in politics; and indisputable as it seems, it is a proposition the full meaning and extent of which is far from clear. It is, indeed, plain that the obedience of the individual to the State within its proper sphere is essential, not merely to the well ordering of the State, but to its very existence. A State to which obedience should not be due would be an absurdity destitute of meaning. The very idea of the State implies authority in its hands and subjection on the part of the individual. Nevertheless, even about this

elementary proposition important and far-reaching differences of opinion have played a famous part in history. For the questions arose: What is the proper sphere of the State, and what are its limitations? On the face of the Gospel, the State is excluded from interference with the things of God. What are those things? What are the spiritual matters expressly excluded from its authority? What is the boundary between the Kingdom of Cæsar and the Kingdom of God? And in addition to this limitation are there no others to protect the subject from intolerable wrong?

The original opinion, an opinion which it must be admitted has much to support it on the face of the New Testament, that the subject had no righteous remedy against tyranny on the part of his ruler, however extreme that tyranny might be, is not now anywhere defended. It is recognised on all hands that tyranny justifies resistance; but at what point misgovernment may properly be described as tyranny or may be thought to justify disobedience; whether different degrees of resistance may be justified by different degrees of misgovernment; what circumstances justify the refusal to pay a tax or conform to a law; what further degree of wrong may be met by rioting and violence, and what superlative oppression calls for armed rebellion and bloodshed:—these are

questions which are to this day undetermined by the general judgment of the community, and about which argument is unusually vague and devoid of cogent or persuasive force. Within very recent years two important cases of actual resistance to the law have arisen, and a third still more important may arise in the near future. Nonconformists have refused payment of the education rate on the ground that it is inconsistent with their convictions to pay it; advocates of Women's Suffrage have riotously approached Parliament, have assaulted the police and used other acts of violence in order to bring home to public opinion the reality of their claim for votes for women; and the inhabitants of Belfast and the surrounding districts who are opposed to Home Rule have announced that in all the circumstances of the case they cannot consent to be placed under the government of a Nationalist Parliament in Ireland, and that they are prepared for a temporary separation rather than consent to such submission. It would not be within the sphere of this book to consider how far these theories of resistance are in these particular cases justified. But it is interesting to point out that hardly any public discussion of the limits of legitimate resistance to the authority of the State has arisen in connection with any of these controversies. The traditional atti-

tude of Conservatism is on the side of authorit and might usually be assumed to be in favour of limiting the right of resistance as closely as possible. It is the heir of the old Tories who, reasoning from the language of the New Testament, affirmed that no active resistance by the subject to the ruler could be right. St. Peter and St. Paul, they maintained, taught obedience to Nero; and no government in modern times has been as bad as Nero's. This position, argumentatively powerful, was only abandoned when experience proved it to be intolerable. When King James II forcibly transferred Oxford Colleges to the Roman Catholics and proposed to punish seven Bishops for petitioning him, the larger part of the Tory Party became convinced that the Apostles could not have intended to forbid resistance in the face of such provocation, though it certainly was not so atrocious as the cruelties of Nero. And from that time onwards there has been an increasingly general acquiescence in the Whig doctrine that rebellion is justifiable in face of oppression. But the decision of the difficult question what oppression does justify rebellion has been left to the decision of the moment.

This is the more hazardous because no more helpful rule in respect to rebellion can easily be laid down than the vague one that resistance to the authority of the State is only

justified when the evils of submission are plainly greater than the evils of resistance. And the application of this rule is attended by a dangerous temptation to rate higher the evils of submission, as being more obvious than the evils of resistance. If this rule, moreover, be adopted, it tends to make rebellion too much an ordinary political resource. It seems to set aside the claim that there is something sacred in the authority of the State, to which resistance must be deemed not merely mischievous, but profane. The question of resistance becomes a balancing of different considerations of expediency; and it is difficult to make any ethical distinction, except in degree, between constitutional opposition and illegal resistance. Plainly, if the question be only one between conflicting arguments of expediency, each case must be considered on its merits. Much will depend on the particular form of resistance contemplated. Refusal to pay taxes does much less mischief than the use of firearms and would seem to require for justification a much less grave occasion. Again, it might be plausibly maintained that lawful action like Parliamentary obstruction or the recent contemplated exercise of the prerogative of creating peers, are more mischievous than a refusal of taxes or even than a moderate degree of violence and rioting. It would be easy to imagine many cases in

which complicated and perplexing arguments might be urged for and against resistance to the law. Yet to leave the stability of social order to depend on the casuistry of a moment of political crisis is dangerous. Although it is difficult to see any logical standpoint between the position that our ancestors abandoned, that the authority of the ruler is divine and must never be resisted, and the position that the righteousness of resistance depends wholly on the balance of advantage in the circumstances of the case, it is certainly to be wished that some clearer and more easily applied rule could be laid down and generally accepted. For as things are, cases of resistance are likely to become more and more common. Nor are Conservatives better guides in this perplexity than Radicals. The most that can be said is that on the whole Conservatives would lean rather more to the side of authority than Radicals, although, as the case of Ireland shows, circumstances might arise strong enough to produce a reversal in the attitude of the two parties.

Something must presently be said about the exclusion of the State from spiritual things and the right relation of Church and State. But, before entering upon that, a prior controversy claims attention. In spite of the slightness of the instruction directly devoted to political matters in the New Testament, it

is frequently claimed that Christianity has a strong affinity to one particular political system, and that its authority may be appealed to to justify that system's advocates. The system for which this claim is made is, strangely enough, Socialism, which exalts especially the function of the State. This claim is so strongly made and meets with such wide acceptance that it will not be a waste of time to consider carefully how far it is well founded.

Certainly there is not a line of the New Testament that can be quoted in favour of the enlargement of the function of the State beyond the elementary duty of maintaining order and repressing crime. As has been already said, the State is almost entirely in the background in the pages of the New Testament. We hear little of it, and nothing whatever of such ideas as are conveyed by the expressions " the community " and " society." The teaching is addressed to the individual conscience and refers only to one social organisation, " the Kingdom of Heaven " or the Church. The importance and prominence of this spiritual society and the social life belonging to it make the ignoring of the State all the more striking. In the Acts of the Apostles, for example, we find ourselves in the midst of the life of a society, the infant Church. But the State is only visible as a

persecuting agent towards which Christians owe no duty save patient submission. And in the Sermon on the Mount, while much is said about a new standard of life to prevail among the disciples, the State is never mentioned at all. The point of view of the Epistles is the same. Much is said of the various duties which are binding on individual Christians and of the general standard of conduct which is expected of them, and there are many references reminding us that Christians were socially organised; but, except the elementary duty of obedience, we read of nothing that concerns the State. The Church and the individual are the themes of the New Testament; the State is out of sight.

This makes it very strange that we should so often hear that the New Testament is socialistic, or that Christ was a socialist, and the like. For Socialism is of course entirely centred round the State. It is by the agency of the State that the socialist hopes to solve all problems which are concerned with trade and industry, or with riches and poverty. The socialist dreams of something like a heaven upon earth and that it is to be attained by State action, by magnifying the office of the State, by concentrating in the hands of the State most of what concerns man's material well-being. Nothing it would seem could be

less congruous to the teaching of the New Testament.

Nevertheless, the impression that the New Testament is socialistic is too widespread to be founded upon nothing; and it is not difficult to see that it is caused by the emphatic warnings addressed to the rich and blessings pronounced upon the poor which are one of the most striking features of the New Testament. People thinking loosely and speaking vaguely have been accustomed to assume that anything that seems to exalt the poor against the rich partakes of the character of Socialism. But the assumption is really a very superficial one, for not only is not a word said or even implied as to the function of the State in relieving the sorrows of poverty, but the whole treatment of the relations of rich and poor is most distinctively individual. In the Gospels riches and poverty are invariably considered only in their bearing on the spiritual well-being of the rich or poor person. Accordingly, poverty is invariably treated as a blessed state; riches as one full of spiritual peril. This is clearly a standpoint remote not only from that of the socialist, but even of any modern social reformer; for it is evidently an assumption implied in the efforts of such a reformer that it is much better to be rich than to be poor, whereas the Gospels teach that it is better to be poor than to be

rich. And this discrepancy springs from the fact that the social reformer is thinking altogether about this world, whereas the teaching of the Gospel is wholly concerned with the effect of riches and poverty as states of preparation for the next world. The material significance of wealth is always treated as subordinate, and attention is concentrated on its spiritual effects. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the sumptuous fare of Dives leads to the place of torment, while the destitution of Lazarus carries him to Abraham's bosom. Again, the salvation of the rich and their entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is described as difficult, almost miraculous, something which is possible only because with God all things are possible. Again, the widow's mite is said to be more than all the gifts of the rich because, though materially less, it is spiritually more in its greater self-sacrifice. This teaching is in the highest degree individualistic. It is the personal spiritual well-being of the individual that is the standard by which the worth of riches is judged. And it is not only in this respect that Gospel teaching is surprisingly remote from the language commonly used nowadays in advocating social improvement. The Gospel is what it is the fashion now to call " other-worldly," that is to say, it directs men's gaze away from the sorrows of this

world to a promised happiness in the next. Further, whereas we now are commonly assured that what is wanted is not charity but such a readjustment of social conditions as would get rid of poverty and make charity unnecessary, in the Gospels we see poverty treated not as an evil, and material wealth as having strictly no value except as an opportunity for charity. Finally, while the sufferings of Lazarus in the parable are made the cause of his subsequent beatitude, we are now constantly assured that it is useless to hope for the moral or spiritual regeneration of those who are suffering acute distress until something is first done for their material well-being.

Some features of this extraordinary contrast cannot, I think, be candidly explained away; but nevertheless, paradoxical though it may seem, it is still certainly true that though there is not a word of socialism in the New Testament, and though social reform in any modern shape can make no direct appeal to its pages, Christianity has been and is the principal source and vitalising energy of social improvement.

The case is, in truth, a very typical one of the operation of Christianity upon the world. The direct influence of the original revelation was wholly pointed at the individual. But the individual once converted becomes in-

evitably, by the fact of his new discipleship, an influence for making society better. To state the matter in the form of a paradox, which perhaps best suits it: Christ was not a social reformer, but the Christian is driven to become one. For the Christian disciple, finding himself bound by the rule that he must love his neighbour as himself, warned with the utmost emphasis of the dangers of riches and of their selfish use, looks round upon the world and sees a condition of his fellow men intolerably reproachful to his conscience, terribly menacing to his peace of mind. Whatever he can do within his own circle of influence he begins to attempt; but his process is slow and disheartening, so little is done compared with the vast mass of misery of which he has knowledge. It may be that in the circumstances of his time or of his own surroundings he can do no more; but if he should see an opportunity of going beyond what a single person can do in his own walk of life and of working for human happiness on the great scale of political and social effort, the burning uneasiness which Christian teaching has planted in his mind, forces him to embrace the opportunity and take the field as a politician and social reformer. The spiritual life to which he is called, purely individual as was his entrance upon it, once adopted, involves him in social activity. This impulse in former

ages made men adopt different methods of benefiting society from those which are now in fashion. But there was an essential sameness in what happened. The liberal endowment of religion and of learning, the ecclesiastical organisation of almsgiving and works of mercy, the devotion of religious orders vowed to charity, the chivalry of a knight errant, are all instances of the power of Christianity to set individuals at work to do good to society according to their lights. Social reform takes a different shape to-day. But Christianity is still at work within those individualist strongholds, the human heart and conscience, driving men forward to do something for others; to save their own souls by helping the society in which they live.

This impulse, like other human impulses, may easily carry men too impatiently forward, and make them forget prudence in zeal. And yet on the face of the Christian revelation they may find counsels of patience. The emphatic teaching of the blessedness of poverty ought to save Christians from the extravagance into which many now fall, of representing that moral and spiritual well-being depend on circumstances of decent comfort. It is obedience to the Christian spirit to seek to improve the material condition of the suffering; but it is contradiction to represent that not only the things of this world, but the

spiritual life itself, depends on material wealth. Nor do we lack an example in the pages of the New Testament of how a social evil of the gravest kind may be tolerated and the mischief of it only mitigated in particular cases. The timidity of the English translators of the Bible has concealed from the ordinary reader in a manner which, if it had been done by Roman Catholics, we should have probably censured as Jesuitical, the fact that St. Paul tolerated slavery, and instead of requiring its abolition among Christians, was content to turn the edge of its oppressions by inspiring both slave-owners and slaves with the spirit of Christian brotherhood. It is probable that an attack on slavery in apostolic times would have increased the revolutionary appearance of Christianity and so raised further obstacles to its acceptance without doing any compensating good. But if we recognise the wisdom of tolerating an evil of such magnitude, surely we ought to lay to heart the lesson of patience that it conveys. Great as are the social evils under which we suffer at the present time, there is certainly nothing so bad as the slavery of the apostolic period. But the gravity of the evil did not induce the Apostles to attempt an agitation which would have been vain and unsettling. They preferred the gradual diffusion of the Christian principle of love mitigating a relationship

which was fundamentally inconsistent with it, and by a slow process bit-by-bit eliminating slavery from Christian society. Here was action very unlike the proceedings of some Christian social reformers of our own day.

Nevertheless Christianity certainly stands for social reform. But does it also stand for Socialism? It is, as we have seen, most perverse to say that our Lord was a socialist. But, just as His method of individual salvation ultimately results in social reform, it may be argued that it leads to Socialism itself. The Christian spirit drives the Christian to improve society. Does it also drive him to give all the means of production, and with them trade, industry and commerce, into the hands of the State?

It cannot be denied that there is strong ground for Christians to censure the existing organisation of commerce and industry. The competitive system is certainly not a Christian system. The governing motive of those who are engaged in industry or commerce is self-interest, not love, and Christianity indisputably requires that the mutual relations of all men shall be controlled by love. To buy as cheaply and sell as dearly as possible; to obtain labour at as low a wage as it can be got; to work only as much as is necessary to obtain employment; to strive, whether as employer or employed, to gain for oneself at

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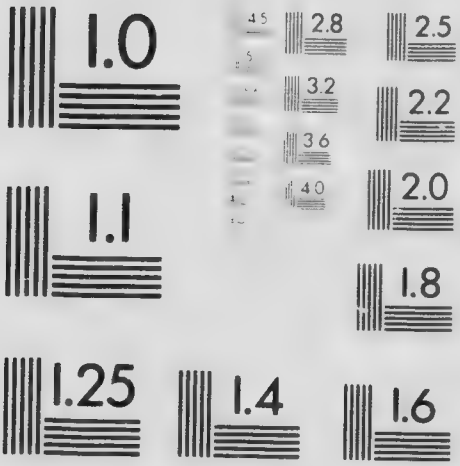

the expense of others; these are not acts characteristic of Christianity. They are not immoral in the sense of transgressing any of the principles of the Ten Commandments: they are not dishonest or violent, but they are self-interested. They essentially belong to a system of morals lower than that which is revealed in the New Testament. This ought to be remembered by good men who are from time to time pained at features in industrial life which are shocking to their consciences. We are often told, we have recently been told by a great many ministers of religion, that the poverty and misery of large numbers of people in this country is a scandal to Christianity. And this is true. But it is strange that the scandal should occasion so much surprise. A system of which the mainspring is self-interest cannot be expected to result in consequences which are acceptable to the Christian conscience. You cannot pluck figs from thistles. The many excellent teachers of religion who criticise the state of society, who lament the condition of the people, are thus like those who should visit a thistle field, seeking in vain for figs and crying out at its prickly barrenness.

So far, then, there seems an apparent case, not indeed for the adoption of Socialism, but for getting rid of the competitive system and substituting something better. But what is the mischief at the root of the competitive

system? It is important to consider this, for unless the root of the evil be taken away, we may be sure that we shall not mend what is wrong though we may change the particular manifestation of it. The evil root is plain enough. It is that men are guided by self-interest. If Christianity is to reform the social system, it can only effectually do it by inducing people to substitute love for self-interest. Nothing is more certain than that the mechanism of human society will only express human character; it will not regenerate it. Character will transform the social system, but it takes something more vivifying than a social system to transform character. Accordingly unless there is prospect of such an improvement in human nature as the general substitution of love for self-interest, we may be sure at the outset that no change of social or political machinery will redeem society.

Whether the particular machinery suggested by the socialist would work well or badly is not for the moment the question. The question is whether Christianity has any natural affinity for Socialism, so that a Christian, as such, ought to be a socialist. That a Christian, as such, ought to be a critic of the existing competitive system is true. But he ought to be a critic of that system only because it is governed by the principle of self-interest. No change in machinery will meet

this criticism, for what is amiss lies in the character of those who work the system; or rather the system is the expression of men's partly defective characters. It requires, therefore, a change in human character to satisfy the Christian objection to the competitive organisation of trade and industry. Socialism does not pretend to change human nature. It claims only to substitute the action of a regulating State for the working of competition. Men would no longer be paid what they could get for their services, they would be paid what the State might think right; and the State, which would be controlled by some democratically elected authority, would determine the value of the services of those who were engaged in trade or industry. This would be by no means an easy task. What we call the "value" of men's services now means what by competition they can get for those services. But if competition were at an end, that method of ascertaining value would be obsolete. Instead of it the State, or the supreme government department entrusted with the function, would have to assess men's services according to its judgment of their inherent value. It would have to settle how much should be paid to ploughmen and how much to cotton spinners and how much to engine-drivers; how much to all the multifarious sorts of labourer and artisan;

how much to those who were charged with the task of superintendence and organisation; how much to those who worked with their heads rather than their bodies; how much to clerks and secretaries; how much to managers and foremen: how much to every one, from the highest to the lowest, who was concerned in the vast enterprises of industry and commerce. Now let any one dismiss from his mind the competitive value of the services of these persons or classes, and let him try and imagine fixing their rewards by a standard which should take account only of their utility to the State, or perhaps also of the arduousness of their labour. It is plain that there would be room for a great deal of difference of opinion in estimating the value of the work of the various classes. What opinion then would prevail? How would the disagreements involved be decided? The people would remain a self-interested people. Every one would still be concerned, as under the competitive system, to get as much as he could. As things are, each man gets as much as he can by competition. Under the system of Socialism he would get as much as he could by using his vote and political influence. A people animated by self-interest and organised according to the principles of Socialism would be divided into classes who would be constantly exerting their utmost energies to bring pressure to bear

upon the government of the State in order to obtain better terms for themselves out of the common fund. In short, competition would, after all, not be abolished; it would merely take another form. Instead of competition in the market, you would have competition at the polling booth. Instead of people seeking their own interests by bargaining with and squeezing one another, you would have them seeking their own interests by bargaining with and squeezing their rulers. I say you would have these things : in fact you do have them in so far as the State now enters into business. Those employed in dockyards and those employed under the Post Office are constantly using their political influence in order to obtain better terms of employment for themselves at the hands of the State. Under Socialism, every one who was engaged in any way in trade or industry would be in the position of a dockyard labourer or a postal official. And all labourers would act as those classes of labour now act. They would press their claims upon Ministers and Members of Parliament and would vote, now on one side and now on the other, in order to improve the conditions of their employment, to get higher wage and shorter hours. But when the whole industrial community was in the same position, with the added difficulty that there was no competitive standard of value to

give a basis of argument as to what are and what are not fair wages, the struggle would be fiercer, and the bitterness that would arise between the contending classes would be more alien from the spirit of Christianity than anything we see to-day. Under the new competition as under the old, the weakest would fall. Those who had fewest votes and least political influence would come off worst in the struggle. In a new sense there would grow up an aristocracy of labour which by its political influence would secure the favour of the State and a constantly increasing share of reward; and there would also be a submerged tenth who, destitute of political power, would be ground down by the classes of labour stronger than themselves. All the circumstances which now rightly shock Christian consciences would be reproduced; and it is even probable that they would be reproduced in a form more ruthless and cruel than to-day. The field would still only bear thistles and not figs. Self-interested human nature must ever inflict suffering on those who are weak, and therefore Christianity is not concerned with any political change which leaves the moral nature of man as it is.

Christianity does not require us to be socialists. The question between Socialism and Individualism is a question of political machinery with which Christianity has no

direct concern. But when we pass to consider, not the goal of the socialist movement, but the methods which some of its advocates recommend, we may go further and say that such methods are often inconsistent with Christian morals. Those who are justly impressed with the severity of the warnings against the selfish enjoyment of riches which abound in the New Testament are sometimes misled into jumping to the conclusion that it is Christian to deprive selfish people of the wealth they misuse and to transfer it to those who are poor. But this is an error of the most fundamental kind; it misses the very point of the teaching of the Gospels as to riches. To relieve distress is the duty of all Christians: to abandon all wealth may be the duty of some: but these acts of self-denial lose the only thing that gives them their Christian character if they are done by compulsion. From the standpoint adopted in the Gospels, riches are in themselves nothing; but they may be the means of dragging down their owners into selfishness, or they may give an opportunity to their owners of practising love by self-sacrifice. The mere transference of material wealth from one pocket to another is a thing which Christianity ignores as indifferent if done by just means, and rebukes as dishonest if done by unjust. For the State, therefore, to come down with the hand of power and take

from one set of people and give to another, i to act in a manner altogether remote from t teaching of such parables as Dives and Lazarus or the Good Samaritan. We can see this vividly if we suppose the Good Samaritan to act as the State is sometimes urged to act. Suppose that instead of relieving the distressed man at his own cost, he had run after the Priest and the Levite and by compulsion constrained them to come back and minister with *their* oil and *their* wine to the sufferings of the afflicted. Suppose he had required them to set the poor man upon *their* beast of burden and to take him to the inn, and had finally forced from each of them one of the two pence which were necessary to pay the cost of entertainment. Does any one suppose that the Good Samaritan would, after such acts, have been held up as the type of the love of a Christian to his neighbour? Clearly, reflections however just on the prevalence of luxury, on the abundance of expenditure on purely selfish objects, on the painful contrasts between the extremes of riches and the extremes of poverty, furnish from the Christian point of view not even the slightest ground to justify the compulsory transfer of property from rich to poor. Christian self-sacrifice is altogether wanting in such a transfer. The State sacrifices nothing; and the rich are merely victims of confiscation. They are impover-

ished but still selfish; for compulsion can be no remedy for selfishness. The very idea of unselfishness is voluntary. Like mercy, its quality is not strained. Compulsory unselfishness is an absurdity, a contradiction in terms.

But our new edition of the parable of the Good Samaritan does not fully bring out the discrepancy between the teachings of the Gospel and proposals to take by Act of Parliament wealth from one class and give it to another. In order to do that we must leave the Good Samaritan out altogether, and suppose that the man who lay wounded by the wayside had sufficiently recovered strength to attack the Priest and Levite, and by threats and violence to force them to give him relief. It is clear that in this last edition the Priest and Levite become the least blameworthy persons in the story; for they are at any rate not dishonest, while the wounded man turns out to be a footpad, only a little less wicked than the original thieves who despoiled him. Yet he is a fair parallel for a majority of voters in a democratic State who should exert their political power in order by law to take wealth from the rich and distribute it amongst themselves.

Methods of this kind are certainly inconsistent with Christianity. But it is fair to the advocates of Socialism to say that many of them would disclaim altogether any desire

to take wealth from the existing possessors of it by any act of revolutionary confiscation. They recommend indeed forms of taxation which can I think be shown to be really unjust and confiscatory. That is a matter of argument which will be considered in another chapter. But there is nothing in their proposals directly and obviously inconsistent with Christian teaching so long as it be admitted that the State ought not to confiscate property for the purpose of relieving the poor. Another alleged inconsistency of Socialism with Christianity is also a matter rather of inference and argument than direct and certain. It is often said that socialists would abolish private ownership and with it the family and the Christian law of marriage. That these consequences would in fact result from adopting Socialism may be true; but it is vehemently denied by many convinced socialists, who say that they do not propose to destroy private ownership, except of the means of production, and that their views are perfectly consistent with the maintenance of the family and of whatever law of marriage conscience may require. In face of these asseverations, it does not seem to me to be fair to say that socialists are in these respects enemies of Christianity. Nothing is more important in applying the standard of Christian morals than to recognise the unfairness of charging people with unchristian

conduct or designs, when the accusation depends on a disputed chain of argument. Political criticism has its proper sphere in indicating from the point of view of Christianity ultimate difficulties which may arise in respect to any political scheme. But moral censure should be strictly confined to those comparatively rare cases where it can be shown that there is a clear and direct contradiction between a political proposal and Christian ethics. This caution is not perhaps sufficiently observed by Conservative critics of Socialism.

It is one of the features of the recent development of political controversy that the ideas of the Liberals of the middle of the nineteenth century have somewhat receded in importance in comparison with the interest excited by the newer propaganda of the socialist movement. But one question affecting the relation of religion and politics which used to be prominent among the plans of Liberalism still occupies a foremost place in public discussion. This question is the propriety of maintaining the established connection between Church and State and of respecting the endowments of the Church. Defence of the Church against attack, either on its established position or on its endowments, is an essential part of the work of Conservatism. Heir of Toryism as it is, it stands for the Church and for the formal

recognition of religion by the State. And disendowment transgresses the principles of Conservatism not only by alienating the resources necessary for the preaching of the Gospel, but also by violating the rights of property.

The Establishment of the Church of England does not rest on any formal statute. So soon as the Saxon kings were converted to Christianity, they and their people gave to the Church the recognition which it has ever since received. The acceptance of the truth of Christianity involved to their minds the recognition of the Church as a necessary consequence—nay, to them it would probably have been impossible to distinguish the two things. Naturally public acts were associated with religious rites; the King was crowned by the Church; the Archbishop and his suffragans were seated among the wise men who formed the King's Council and Legislature; the Bishop sat side by side with the Ealdorman and Sheriff in the County Court; all possessors and cultivators of land yielded a tithe of the produce of the fields as a religious duty; the laws of the Church in respect to all matters of belief and morals were enforced by the authority of the King and his officers; the festivals and fasts of the Church were publicly observed; all important public acts came to be associated with the

intercessions or the thanksgivings of the Church. For it is important to remember that what we call "establishment" was and is essentially a religious relation existing between the State and the Church. This relation may have various incidents, but its essence is purely religious. Wherever a nation formally and by law accepts a church as the true exponent of religion, establishment exists. But establishment, while it always must have this essential characteristic, may in other respects approximate to widely different types. In our country, in the long history of fourteen hundred years, the relation between Church and State has been gradually developed and adjusted, sometimes by the informal operation of custom and opinion, sometimes by the direct act of the State in legislation, until it has come to bear the character we see to-day. Always retaining its religious essence, the incidents of establishment have varied greatly. Before we pass to consider the questions that arise in respect to those incidents, in respect, that is to say, to the measure of control exercised by the State over the Church and the measure of privilege allowed to the Church by the State, let us first try to determine whether establishment in its essential character as a relation of religious recognition between Church and State is legitimate.

So long as the people of this country were fully agreed about religion, no one doubted the propriety of establishment, and there seemed no reason to doubt it. But when profound differences of opinion arose in connection with the Reformation, and when it turned out that these differences of opinion were not held only by a few eccentric men for a short time, but inspired the enthusiastic adherence of multitudes and endured from generation to generation, it came to be questioned whether the State ought to recognise a religious body which no longer commanded the acceptance of the entire nation. This question seems to depend for its answer on determining what precisely we mean by a corporate act of religious recognition. The State, we say, is as a body to be religious. By that we mean that all who bear a part in State affairs, from the King on his throne to the humblest voter who takes part in an election, should be reminded that behind the visible world, with its calls for good or evil upon his mind and body, with its requirements of toil and sacrifice, its gifts of success and prosperity, its hopes and anxieties, its ambitions and disappointments, its pleasures and pains, there lies the unseen world, the temple of an Ineffable Being, Righteous, Omnipotent and Eternal, which is in truth the great reality, which even now dominates

all that we see and hear and touch and taste, and will last when the world of sense has passed away, for the individual at his death, for the whole human race at a time more or less distant but inevitably sure. It seems plain that a formal recognition by the State of this great truth does not lose its value, even for those who dissent from the teaching of the Church that may be established, unless their dissent reaches the point of a denial of the existence of an unseen world and of a moral Governor of the universe. And in fact there used to be very many, and there are still some, persons who dissent from the established Church of England, but who do not wish to see the State's recognition of that Church withdrawn. Most English Roman Catholics take this view, and some, though only a few, Protestant Nonconformists. The simplicity of the implied national assent to religion makes possible also what at first sight seems the startling anomaly, that in Great Britain there are two established Churches holding substantially different theological tenets, one in England and the other in Scotland. English Churchmen can, and in fact do, support and rejoice in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, although themselves dissenting from it and preferring to worship when in Scotland in the Episcopal Scottish Church. For to dises-

tablish the Church of Scotland would from the Anglican point of view, not less than from the Presbyterian, be to give up, so far as Scotland was concerned, the national affirmation of the existence of God and the moral responsibility to His judgment which attaches to men in their national, no less than in their individual acts. Nor can we help regretting that in Ireland this recognition was withdrawn in 1869. The consideration that the Church of Ireland was only the church of a minority, and over the greater part of Ireland of a very insignificant minority, does not justify disestablishment. For disestablishment is not a gain to the Christianity taught to and accepted by the majority of Irishmen; it is a loss to the cause of religion however taught. Had the proposal in 1869 been not merely to disestablish the Church of Ireland, but to establish in place of it the Roman Catholic Church, the case would have been different. The controversy would then have been as to the best way of performing a religious duty incumbent on the State. What was actually decided was that that religious duty should be abandoned altogether. It was as though a man, being disposed to prefer worshipping in a Roman Catholic rather than a Protestant Church, should instead of transferring his devotions give up public worship altogether. The disestablishment of the Irish Church was repre-

sented as a sacrifice to justice. It was, in fact, a loss to religion.

It is likely that if it were the custom to consider establishment in what I have ventured to call its essential character as a national act of religious devotion, the controversy about it would never have arisen or would have taken a widely different form. For it is not the essence of establishment that has led to dispute. It is its incidents that have brought it into disfavour; and these incidents fall under two heads. Establishment has been in the past in all three Kingdoms a system of State control and Church privilege, and it is these things that have brought it into dispute.

Until a very recent period the theory of the law was that only one religion was permissible, and that religion the religion of the established Church. By a series of acts of Parliament, and by the movement of opinion which even before the law was changed frequently rendered it inoperative, penalties and disabilities were removed from those who dissented from the established Churches. But the recollection of the hardships imposed by law and the insult conveyed even by a technical disability, left a memory of bitterness which survived the triumph of toleration, and certain privileges for the Church, notably the levying of a Church rate, remained after penalties and disabilities on dissent had been

abolished. These, while they lasted, added fuel to the animosity with which the establishment was regarded by Nonconformists. But gradually all that remains of what can properly be called privilege has been set aside; and what is left of the special position of the Church of England under the establishment does not go beyond mere recognition and the assertion of control on the part of the State. If the incidents of establishment in England are summed up they will be found less numerous than is perhaps often supposed. The Coronation of the Sovereign is by far the most important act characteristic of establishment that is still retained. The opening of the sittings of the two Houses of Parliament with prayer according to the use of the Church of England is a somewhat similar, but less notable, mark of recognition. The position of the Bishops in the House of Lords might be called an exception to the general abolition of privilege if it were now defended upon the claim of any special right in the established Church. But, in fact, if the episcopal seats in the House of Lords are justified at all, it is either on the ground that the Bishops are, as representatives of an important body of opinion, proper members of a Second Chamber (a defence which logically leads to the admission of the heads of other denominations), or else as a mere historical survival which

does no harm, and which for the sake of history it would be a pity to abolish. The recognition of the ecclesiastical law as part of the law of the country belongs rather to the control of the State over the Church than to any privilege allowed to the Church; for it would be difficult to argue that the Church derived any great benefit from it. Probably in the course of future Church reform the legal machinery of the Church will be largely modified; and if that modification falls short of completely disentangling ecclesiastical from secular laws, that will be due to the extreme complexity of dividing what has been so long interwoven. The question is, however, not one of privilege but rather of convenience of machinery. Speaking generally, therefore, it may be said that the establishment in England is no longer a system of privilege, unless mere recognition be so called. It is, however, still to some extent a system of State control over the Church.

This aspect of establishment is warmly criticised not only by Nonconformists but by many Churchmen. State control is mainly of three kinds. The appointment to bishoprics and other important Church offices is in the hands of the Crown. This enables the State to exercise very great influence over the life of the Church. Indeed if modern Prime Ministers had used their power in the

spirit which prevailed in former times, it can hardly be doubted that the system would have been found intolerable, and Churchmen would at all costs have put an end to it. But greatly to the credit of the statesmen of our day no recent Prime Minister has used Church patronage as, for example, Sir Robert Walpole used it, to make the Church subservient to his political views. On the contrary, appointments have invariably been marked by signs of conscientious regard to the interests of the Church, and an earnest desire to meet the wishes of all considerable bodies of Church opinion. This has made a system practically not unsatisfactory which it is difficult to defend in theory. The second branch of State control depends on the supreme jurisdiction of the King's Courts over the ecclesiastical. Up to a point, the necessity and propriety of this is incontestable. There cannot be two sovereigns in a country, and the King's Courts must therefore determine the limits of all other jurisdictions and of the powers that any authority in the country can exercise. Nor can their right to interfere be denied in so far as the purely secular concerns of the Church are affected. In both these respects, indeed, the State exercises, and must exercise, control not only over the established Church but over all religious bodies in the country. The particular method

of the control thus exercised no doubt differs in respect to the Church, but that is only a matter of machinery. But State jurisdiction in ecclesiastical causes goes further. A final appeal lies to the Privy Council in respect not only to questions of jurisdiction, but to the actual merits of a purely spiritual controversy, such as, for example, what ritual is to be practised at the altars or what doctrine is to be taught in the sermons that are preached from the pulpits of the Church. Such an authority seems hard to reconcile with belief in the reality of the Church's spiritual vocation and relation with the unseen. If the Church be a spiritual body inspired with a divine life, as she claims, it cannot possibly be right that a secular tribunal should seek to regulate her teaching or ministrations. More is to be said in favour of the third branch of State control. No new law can be passed by the Church without the consent of the Crown, and practically none of importance without the concurrence of Parliament. This, undoubtedly, is a great hindrance to some necessary reforms, but it is not theoretically unreasonable that the State should claim to be consulted before changes which might powerfully affect the national life are introduced by the Church. The idea of establishment being that the State recognises the Church, it is proper that

before the Church makes changes which might alter the significance of the State's recognition, the State should be consulted.

But for the purposes of practical politics by far the most important controversy in regard to the position of the Church relates not strictly to the establishment but to Church endowments. These endowments are called in question upon the theory that they were originally national, but given to the Church because of its established relation to the State, and may therefore properly be transferred by the State to any other object of public utility. Some advocates of disendowment have gone so far as to claim everything, including the fabrics of the parish churches, which can be said to belong to the Church. But of recent times the proposal to disendow the Church is commonly confined to such endowments as were made before 1662. This date is fixed because it is suggested that before that year the Church was regarded as national in a sense which ceased to be applicable when the Nonconformists had definitely parted from her communion. Before that separation, therefore, endowments were claimed to have been given to the Church as a national body: after the separation it is admitted they were given to the Church as a religious body to which only part of the nation adhered.

The conclusive objection to this theory of Church endowments is that it is altogether unhistorical Nowadays when the love of religion is waxing cold; when from various points of view we exalt the grandeur of the State and of the nation; when some of us are socialists and would enlarge the functions of the State, and others of us are imperialists who glow with patriotic enthusiasm over the splendid and world-wide greatness of the Empire, it is not unnatural that we should conceive of dedicating great sums of money to a national purpose. But in former times, in the long period of history that intervenes between the landing of St. Augustine and the separation of the Nonconformists in 1662, the claims of religion were incomparably stronger than the claims of nationality. To suppose that a mediæval benefactor or that a Saxon tithe-payer would have given of his substance to a national object with the same readiness that he did to the Christian Church, is wholly to misunderstand the standpoint of mediæval men. To them the Church was divine in the fullest sense. She held the keys of death and hell; her curse was heavy in this life and heavier in the life to come; she could wipe away all sin; she was the guardian of ineffable mysteries; she was watched over by saints and angels; miracle attended her ministration; ruin followed on her anathemas;

she was greater than all the nations of Christendom; she was the City of God, the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ; to her, therefore, was due all that a pious soul could give who worshipped God and feared the Judgment to come. This frame of mind is as remote from a modern proposal to assist secondary education, hospitals or museums out of funds now religiously used, as two sets of human ideas can possibly be. Endowments were certainly never given to the nation in any sense whatever, nor were they given from any motive which can be called national or patriotic. They were given from purely religious motives to a purely religious purpose; and in so far as the intention of the original donors is to be respected, to a religious purpose they must be kept. There is not, indeed, even an outward appearance of anything national about the endowments. For they were not given to the Church as a whole, and certainly not to the Church as a national church. They were given to the various bishoprics, monasteries and parishes in which the donors were interested. They were given for the sake of religion. Whether in their motive, their object or their scope, they do not even resemble national property. They belong to the Church if anything can belong to the Church.

Conservatives therefore resist Disestablish-

ment and Disendowment. The recognition of religion implied in establishment and the defence of the endowments against confiscation are essential parts of Conservatism, characteristic of the typical Conservative reverence both for religion and for property.

If Conservatives value the establishment as a recognition of religion, they are not less convinced of the importance of maintaining in other ways the religious life of the community. Conservatism insists on the national acceptance of Christianity, and desires to reconcile that acceptance with complete toleration of all sorts of opinion on religious matters. The task of this reconciliation has long been the most difficult problem to be solved in respect to national education. Advanced Liberals and the Labour and Socialist Parties seek to satisfy the ideal of equality of treatment among different religious bodies by exiling religion altogether from the schools and having a purely secular system of education. Moderate Liberals and the majority of Nonconformists have more piously, but less intelligently, sought to conform to equality by adopting in State schools a form of religious education which should be Christian without being distinctive of any particular denomination. But the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church have always protested against these plans of settlement, not

only because they were unsatisfactory to the religious convictions of Churchmen and Roman Catholics, but also because they are essentially inconsistent with religious equality. To teach no religion as true while teaching much secular learning, is in fact to raise in the mind of the pupil a presumption against religion. To teach what may pass as the Christianity common to various religious bodies is to create a presumption against the distinctive system of the English and Roman Churches. For, according to the system of those Churches, the child is at its baptism made the member of a supernatural body, and his religious education is merely the process of initiating him into the beliefs and conduct which membership of that body requires. If he is taught Christian morals and the elements of Christian theology outside and independently of his life as a Churchman, his mind is in fact unconsciously warped against Churchmanship and either towards Nonconformity or towards the indifferent neglect of all religion. Impartiality between religious bodies is not to be achieved by attempting a compromise based on eliminating the more controversial parts of various religious systems and amalgamating the residuum, but by extending an equal measure of assistance and countenance to all sorts of religious opinion. The problem is to be solved by accepting the

parent as the arbiter of his child's faith, and putting the State into the position of the parent's deputy, faithfully carrying out, without bias, the directions that the parent may give, and teaching the child with equal efficiency and zeal whatever religious opinions the parent's chosen denomination may profess. In this way the State really safeguards the religious life of the people without making any particular religious body a privileged favourite.

Probably no function of Conservatism is more important at the present time than to watch over the religious life of the people in the sphere of politics. Religion, as has been pointed out, touches politics very closely in respect to many questions—such as the claims of rich and poor, all measures for ameliorating the condition of the people, the connection between Church and State, and national education. Its indirect influence extends beyond these limits as far as any controversy which raises issues of moral obligation. The championship of religion is therefore the most important of the functions of Conservatism. It is the keystone of the arch upon which the whole fabric rests. As long as Conservatism makes the fulfilment of its duties to religion the first of its purposes, it will be saved from the two principal dangers that alternatively threaten it: the

danger of sinking into a mere factious variation of Liberalism, supporting the claims of another set of politicians, but propounding measures not distinguished by any pervading principle: or the other danger of standing only for the defence of those who are well off, without any sincere endeavour to consider the interests of the whole people, or any higher object than the triumph of the sagacious selfishness of the prosperous. Religion is the standard by which the plans of politicians must be judged, and a religious purpose must purify their aims and methods. Emphasising this truth, Conservatism will be the creed neither of a superfluous faction nor of a selfish class.

CHAPTER V

PROPERTY AND TAXATION

NOTHING has more effective significance in Conservatism than its bearing on questions of property. Ever since Conservatism arose to resist the revolutionary movement of 1789, the defence of property has been one of its principal purposes. And it is with questions of property that the most important of political conflicts in the future will be wholly or partly concerned. Especially is this the case in the problems that annually arise in connection with taxation. Nor are current ideas either about property or about taxation as clearly defined as might be wished. A Conservative who wishes to have a coherent intellectual position from which to formulate a social policy must first of all have at any rate some rudimentary theory about property and taxation.

Private property might perhaps be defined as material wealth owned by an individual or a number of individuals; and ownership as the right of using property at the discretion of the owner. It is essential to the conception

of ownership that this discretion, if not unlimited, is at least not so limited that the owner is always bound to conform to the wishes and opinions of others than himself. It follows that it is a test of true ownership that an owner may do with his property what others think he ought not to do. If he is restrained in his discretion so closely that he may do nothing which others blame, he may be said to administer wealth or be the trustee of it, he cannot clearly or usefully be said to own it. This is a matter of definition: the question then arises whether the relation thus defined between individuals and material wealth is a justifiable one.

It is usual to say that the ownership of private property derives its justification from the requirements of social progress and the common good of the community. This may be true; and if we were considering the principles on which to found a new society, and had a clear stage on which to build what institutions we thought best, it would be necessary to set out this justification in full detail. Then it would be our business to consider the stimulating effect on human activity which is produced by allowing men to own property. We should note how more than one of the strongest of human instincts are stirred to promote industry and thrift by the possibility of acquiring and accumulating

property. The prudence which foresees a future of infirmity or old age; the affection of a parent for his child and the desire to save the child from the hardships of life; the strong inclination to assert each individual personality as against all other personalities, and the love of power which is associated with that assertion, combine to make the prospect of owning property attractive and to induce men to strain their capacities of mind and body to acquire it. For the sake of its acquisition men labour to strengthen the dominion of humanity over nature; to gather together the produce of the earth: to elaborate the arts of manufacture; to organise human activities more and more efficiently: to build up society and to contribute in countless ways to the onward march of social progress. All this could be shown step by step. But this detailed review of the ultimate causes of social well-being is not necessary to those who seek to justify private property as it exists in our own established and organised society. The simple consideration that it is wrong to inflict an injury upon any man suffices to constitute a right of private property where such property already exists. For it is clear that since a normal human being is vexed and distressed by being deprived of any part of his property, it is wrong either for another individual or for the State to

inflict upon him that vexation and distress unless for some sufficient reason. The right of property so stated is merely part of the right of any human being not to be gratuitously vexed by his neighbour. A man's rights define the duties of others, and the right of property implies only a part of the elementary duty that no man should injure his neighbour.

Many people seem to seek to found the right of property on some claim of justice derived from the circumstances of its acquisition, and so think themselves enabled to distinguish between property and property, and to respect the ownership of some owners far more scrupulously than the ownership of others. But all such ways of thought seem erroneous. No one can claim to own anything on the ground that he has earned it, if by earning is implied an element of desert. The conception which lies more or less definitely in people's minds, that a man is justly entitled to what he owns because he has deserved to acquire it is, I suggest, a delusion; and all consequent distinctions about earned or unearned increment of wealth are equally unfounded.

How, in the world as we know it, is wealth acquired? Except in the simple but unimportant case of a man producing wealth by his own labour for his own use, as when he grows potatoes for his own eating in his own

garden, a man's acquisitions are governed by the forces that control exchange. No one can gain more than trivialities (like the potatoes) without help from others, and this help is secured by a bargain which determines what he is to get for what he has to give. So that we may say that a man acquires wealth either by lending or selling what he is already possessed of, or by lending himself. Selling need not be separately mentioned, since for our present purpose there is nothing to distinguish it from lending. Let us say then that a man gets wealth by lending his possessions or lending his exertions. A distinction may fairly be drawn between the two forms of lending, and the word "earning" may be properly applied to the second method of acquisition. But if so, "earning" must not be understood to connote any element of desert; for a moment's consideration is sufficient to show that exertions are not paid for in proportion to their desert, but that on the contrary exertions which deserve little, or even which are positively undeserving, are more remunerative than those the merit of which is comparatively high. Take for instance the writers of two books. One book relates to some learned topic, expounds the fruits of some elaborate scientific research, or illumines an unknown tract in the study of some rare and ancient language. Such a book

deserves highly. Its author has laboured long and hard and has been animated by an unselfish zeal for research and by a desire to advance the frontiers of human knowledge. But he is paid little or nothing. The press of one of the Universities, for the sake of the learning of the book, but with no expectation of profit, consents to publish it. Its sale is small, and the gains of that sale are far less than the cost of publication. It makes no profit, but a deficit. The second book is a romance. Its author is an ignorant person who has a literary gift, not beneficial to humanity, of writing crudely and rapidly about topics which stir widespread tastes for horror or indecency. This book costs little to produce and sells extensively, and the gains of its author are far greater than those of the laborious student whose book depended for its existence upon the good-will of a University. The author of the romance deserved nothing, unless rebuke or punishment. The industrious scholar deserved much. But it was the novelist who acquired wealth as the fruit of his exertions. This is of course an extreme case, but in every case that can be named it will be found that there is no correspondency whatever between the deserving of exertions and the remuneration they obtain. A Parliamentary barrister earns in an hour more than a ploughman earns in a month, and a prima

donna for singing two songs at a concert will get more than the year's wages of most working-men. Nor as between one wage-earning working-man and another do the distinctions of wages depend upon desert. Skilled men get more than unskilled, and some sorts of skill are more highly paid than other sorts. But there is no ethical merit in the skill that is most rewarded, and no ethical defect in the lack of skill that is most lowly paid. Ethics are beside the point; desert is irrelevant; the pecuniary value of exertions is determined by wholly non-ethical economic causes. What economists call "the law of supply and demand" regulates earnings; and it is not the deserts of a man but the rarity of his capacity and the intensity of the desire of other men to obtain the use of it, which fix how much he will get for his labour, whether of mind or body.

If the gains of labour depend on non-ethical considerations, it is still plainer that the gains of those who lend their possessions are altogether unrelated to merit. It used indeed to be said by economists that an investor deserved the interest on his invested money by the self-control he exhibited in investing it rather than spending it. But this is a very artificial and unreal argument. No doubt from the point of view of the community it is often more desirable that

money should be saved than spent. But this is by no means always so. Expenditure may be benevolent or public-spirited; it may be devoted to the propagation of religion or to the investigations of science; indeed it is only of purely luxurious expenditure of the most foolish type that we can confidently say that the money involved would have been better saved than spent. But even when saving is wise and in the interest of the community, it is absurd to suppose that it is done from altruistic motives or that it has any ethical merit. A man saves because he thinks it is his advantage to save, and he cannot reasonably be thought to deserve the interest he gets for his investments by any merit of his own. And the same is true of the owner of land who lends his land for rent. The landlord, like the investor and like the labourer, makes his gain not in respect of any merit, but because he has something to lend which other people want and are prepared to pay for. It is the demand for land or for capital or for labour, whether mental or bodily, that creates the value of these possessions and exertions. Without demand there is no value. An old shoe by the wayside, a pebble on the beach, rotten fruit that has fallen in the dirt, have no value, for no one wants them; and to be unwanted is to be valueless. The other element which is essential to

value is some limitation in supply The air we breathe is not unwanted; it is indeed indispensable to human life; but its unlimited abundance deprives it of any pecuniary value. The illustration reminds us of a distinction which is often lost sight of by persons inexperienced in economic discussion. The word "value" is used in two quite different senses. Sometimes it is used to express the money worth of an article; sometimes it is used more vaguely and generally to indicate that that to which it is attached is in some sense desirable or estimable. Thus we speak of a "valued friend," or a "valuable contribution to debate," or the "value of an argument," not meaning that the friend or the speech or the argument would fetch much if sold, but meaning that they are objects of esteem upon one ground or another. Air is in the highest degree valuable in the general sense of being a desirable thing, but for the purpose of our present discussion it has no value; that is to say, it commands no price in money or goods. It has, as the economists speak, no value in exchange. And it is rarity and desirability in the article, not merit in the owner, that make a thing valuable in this sense, and the gain of lending it great. The gains then that a man makes by lending his labour or his possessions depend not on his merits but on the demand that exists for

what he has to lend and the limitation of the supply of similar wealth or labour. The whole process is non-ethical, and upon whatever ground the owner can claim a right to his gain, it cannot be on the ground that he deserves it. This applies equally to all sorts of profit, whether it be the dividends paid on an investment or the rent of land. Nay, as has been pointed out, it applies to the gains made by lending exertions, to the gains of a writer or a barrister or a ploughman or an engine-driver. None of these are paid, neither the landlord nor the investor nor the author nor the lawyer nor the wage-earner, in respect to their ethical deserts, but all of them in respect to the comparative rarity and desirability of what they have to lend.

But it is sometimes said that in respect to land, or to certain sorts of land, another consideration arises which ought to be reckoned as equitably diminishing the claim of ownership, at least in so far as to make the land affected a peculiarly fit subject for taxation. It is believed that the community creates all or a large proportion of the value of land. For example, at a Conference held at Glasgow on September 11th, 1911 "to promote the taxation of land values," the following resolution was, amongst others, agreed to :—

"(4th) That this Conference affirms its

deep conviction that the existing deplorable condition of the people in regard to Bad Housing, Low Wages, and Unemployment in town and country is directly traceable to Land Monopoly, and is further aggravated by the present system of Taxation and Rating:—emphatically declares its opinion that the only just and expedient method of removing these social evils is by the exemption of all improvements and all the processes of industry from the burden of Rates and Taxes and the substitution of a direct Tax on the value of all Land, a value which is entirely due to the Presence, Growth, and Industry of the people."

There are several highly disputable propositions in this resolution, but we are concerned for the moment with the last one expressed in the words "a value which is entirely due to the presence, growth, and industry of the people." Now it is of course quite true that the value of land like the value of every other commodity which has any value, and like the value of all labour, from the value of the professional services of the Lord Advocate to the value of the work of any artisan in Glasgow, depends entirely on the presence of the people: that is to say, if there were no people there would be no one either to purchase or hire land or any commodity, or to hire workmen in Glasgow or barristers in Edinburgh. Accordingly neither

commodities nor labour would have any value. But if it is meant, as of course it is, that the value of land depends in some peculiar sense upon the community, the proposition is altogether untrue and misleading.

Let us analyse in what the value of land consists. Land has value like everything else because it possesses certain utilities which people desire. I reckon that the utilities of land may be classified under three heads. There is the utility of land which depends on the various plants which grow out of it: this we may call the vegetable utility of land. There is the utility of land which depends on the minerals which form it or lie within it; this may be called the mineral utility of land. And thirdly there is the utility of land as the floor of habitable space, which may be called the spacial utility of land. Each of these utilities has its value, and that value depends on precisely the same forces as the value of the utility of any other commodity in the world—of the utility of a coat, for example, as an article of wearing apparel. There is a demand for each of these utilities, and that demand obtains a supply to satisfy it by paying a certain price. Or in other words the price is driven sometimes up and sometimes down by the variations in demand and supply. Take, for example, the vegetable

utility of English land. The value of this depends upon the value of the various crops that can be grown in the land, and the value of these crops in its turn depends on the relation between the demand for and supply of them. When, therefore, the development of corn lands in America and elsewhere vastly increased the supply of corn available, without any proportionate increase in the demand for corn, the demand for agricultural land went down, the value (that is to say) of its vegetable utility was diminished and only a lower rent was obtainable by the owners of it. If in the future population goes on growing without any corresponding increase in the land under cultivation throughout the world, or in the productivity of that which is cultivated, the value of corn will go up and with it the demand for the vegetable utility of English land, which will thus also enhance in value and obtain a higher rent.

Now how far is it true that the value of this utility is either created or increased by the people? What justification is there for the statement that this value "is entirely due to the presence, growth and industry of the people"? It is clear that the expression "the people" may mean the human race generally, or that part of it which lives in the United Kingdom, or it may mean the community acting as an organised State, whether

nationally or municipally. As already said, the people in the sense of humanity or of the inhabitants of this country, undoubtedly play a part in creating the value of land by desiring the produce of land and seeking to purchase it. But they do this in respect to everything which has any value. It can hardly be meant to assert that the value of land is due to the same causes as everything else. For plainly the utterance of such a truism would furnish no ground for treating land differently from everything else. We must assume that something more is intended by the statement that "the value of land is entirely due to the presence, growth and industry of the people." But yet it is hard to see what other possible influence in creating value the people generally can be said to have except the influence of consumers or users making a demand. It may indeed be argued that the people as a community by providing for the security and convenience of trade and commerce and enforcing the safeguards of law against criminals, enable the industry of farming to be carried on and the produce of the soil to be collected and carried to market. Doubtless in this way the community, if it cannot be said positively to create the supply of produce, does very greatly facilitate it, and therefore powerfully affects its value. But this again is true in respect of all industry and all production.

The protection of the State is perhaps rather less important to a comparatively simple industry like agriculture than it is to an elaborate process of manufacture, or to mercantile transactions resting mainly or wholly upon contract and credit. What the State does, therefore, for the value of the produce of land and so for the value of land itself, it does for the value of all produce, for the gains of all trade, commerce or industry. It seems plain that this general operation of the State cannot be the basis of a theory that a direct tax on the value of all land is more justifiable than "the burden of rates and taxes" on "all improvements and all the processes of industry." Evidently those who favour the taxation of land values believe that there is something peculiar in the relation between the people and the value of land, whereas the relation of the people as consumers creating a demand, and the other relation of the people as the State securing the processes of industry and commerce, are not in the least peculiar to land but common to all sorts of commodities and all sorts of production.

It is difficult to do justice to a theory which one believes to be a delusion, and I hesitate, therefore, to attempt to expound the views of those who believe in the justice of special taxation for land values. But as far as I am able to understand their ideas, they rely

upon the proposition that land is a monopoly, that, therefore, it is quite unlike most other commodities, and that the people are made the victims of extortion by the monopolists who own land, and are forced against their will to create in altogether a unique way a demand, and consequently a value, for land. Land-taxers appear to be thinking of what I have called the "spacial" utility of land rather than its vegetable or mineral utility. As has been pointed out, land is useful not only for what grows in it or what can be dug out of it, but also as being the floor of habitable space. Human beings must live somewhere. In normal circumstances they can live neither on the water nor in the air. Therefore they must live on the land; and it is this spacial utility which I apprehend land-taxers call a monopoly. But in this they are inaccurate. All the land in the earth is not owned by one person but by a vast number of persons, and even the land in the United Kingdom is owned by very many. Land is no doubt limited in amount, and land conveniently situated for this purpose or that is still more limited; but "monopoly" is not the proper word by which to describe the limited supply of an article. The supply of everything that has value is limited, but wherever there are different persons controlling the supply of different parcels of a commodity and com-

peting against one another, there is no monopoly. And this is usually the case in respect to the letting and hiring of land. But it is doubtless true that the limitation of the supply of land available for a particular purpose, as for instance land conveniently situated in the neighbourhood of a great town, does powerfully affect its value. The question then follows: does this limitation of supply give to the people any peculiar share in creating the value of the land?

Land is not the only thing of which the supply is limited. Indeed nothing in the world that has pecuniary value can be unlimitedly supplied; since without some limit there can be no value. But the character of the limitation varies. The supply of works of art is closely limited, for nothing in the world except the labour of the artists can increase their amount. In the case of a dead artist the limitation is therefore absolute. No more landscapes by Rembrandt can possibly be painted, since Rembrandt is dead. Land available for a particular purpose is limited by nature and the laws of space. But here there is a measure of elasticity. Land of inferior degree of convenience may be brought in to supplement the supply of that which is most convenient. Improved means of communication constantly operate in this manner. Railways, roads, motor-cars,

enlarge the supply of land which is available for those who desire to reside within so many minutes' journey of a town. Manufactured articles, again, can be supplied subject to the limitation of the cost of producing them, and this cost depends on the value of the materials, labour and capital used. And into these values indirectly enter the limitation of the supply of labour, and the limitation of the supply of raw material caused by the limitation of the supply of land. But there is no peculiarity about the limitation of the supply of land which justifies a special claim on behalf of the people that they have created the value of land. Even if the limitation really did amount to a monopoly it would not justify such a claim. The people have not caused the limitation of supply. Nature limits the supply of land as she also limits the supply of labour. There are only a limited number of human beings in the United Kingdom, just as there is only a limited quantity of land. And of those human beings there is only a number still more limited who are available as labourers for any particular kind of work, just as of the limited land of the United Kingdom only a more limited amount is available for those who wish to reside in a particular locality. But land-taxers would surely not argue that the people created the value of the labour

of any individual in such a sense as to give them an equitable claim to appropriate the value of that labour in whole or in part. And yet it is clear that if they are prepared to argue that because demand operating on a limited supply creates the value of land, the community have a special right over that value, they must also argue that a similar effect on the value of labour must give the community a similar right over *that* value. And indeed, since the influence of demand and of the limitation of supply is universal, they must argue that all exchangeable value is created by the people and may be wholly or partly appropriated by the community. But this universal claim is precisely what land-taxers do not make. They make a special claim over the value of land and that special claim is quite baseless.

Perhaps this will be made clearer if an actual illustration is considered. Land near Golder's Green has, it is said, lately risen considerably in value. This is consequent upon the opening of the new tube railway which makes Golder's Green a convenient place for those to reside at who have work in London. Let us analyse exactly what has taken place. It is plain that what has immediately raised the value of the land in Golder's Green is that a larger number of people have been anxious to hire or buy it.

There has been a larger demand for it. This demand has not strictly been created by the tube railway, but it has been made effectual by it. Before the tube railway existed there were no doubt plenty of people wanting some such place of residence as Golder's Green, but until the railway existed the demand did not affect Golder's Green, because Golder's Green was not sufficiently convenient of access. The tube railway enabled those who wanted to live in a place like Golder's Green to make their desire effectual. It may be said that the tube railway gave accessibility to Golder's Green. But it would be more strictly accurate to say that it gave to those who were desirous of access to Golder's Green the facilities that they desired. The consequence of thus affording facilities to these people was to make it possible for them to satisfy their wish to live at Golder's Green, and so to constitute a largely increased effective demand for land there. So the value of the land went up.

Now if the community is to make a claim to have created the increased value of land in Golder's Green, that claim must be framed in one of two ways. It may be said that the increased value was the effect of the demand and that, since it was the work of those who made that demand and not of the landowner, it ought to belong to them and not to him. But in that case the claim must be made on

behalf of those who now reside in Golder's Green, not on behalf of the State. And, further, by parity of reasoning it must be contended that the value of everything belongs to some one who is not the thing's owner. For since value altogether depends upon demand, and since the owner is necessarily not a person who demands his own property, the value of everything is always created by some one other than the owner and must not be allowed to belong to him. These consequences are plainly absurdities. Secondly, it may be urged with more plausibility that the tube railway has caused the increase of value, and that therefore it ought to belong to those who have made the tube railway and in part to the State by whose assistance the tube railway has been made. It is clear, however, that the State has played only a very subordinate part in the construction of the tube railway. All that the State has done has been to lend its power to compel owners of property concerned to give thoroughfare to the railway on fair terms. This seems a very insufficient service upon which to make a claim for the whole increment of the value of land in Golder's Green, or even for a large part of it. If, therefore, it be argued that the tube railway is the creator of the increase of the value of the land in Golder's Green, and that that increased

value ought to belong to the creator of it, it would have to be assigned mainly to the shareholders and promoters of the railway by whose capital and enterprise, and by the labour of whose employees, the railway has been made. But further, here as before we find that the State is only doing for the tube railway and the people who desire to travel on it, and indirectly for the owners of land in Golder's Green, what it does for all sorts of enterprises and all sorts of traders and all sorts of possessors of wealth. If it were not for the action of the State, none except the simplest forms of industry could be conducted. Without streets and lights and water-supply, life in great cities would be impossible. Without the means of transport that have been provided by the action of the State, all the trade and commerce which is now carried on by persons moving to and fro along the public ways would be hindered, and the workman himself, narrowed to the opportunities of obtaining employment to which he could walk, would find his employment rarer and his wages lower. And if the State does much by assisting transport, it does still more by maintaining security of life and property. By the action of law contracts are enforced; by the efforts of the police crime is restrained and disorder repressed. So men can go about

their work; the vast enterprises and risks of business can be undertaken; a system of credit which multiplies the productivity of wealth almost beyond the bounds of imagination can grow up and exist, all depending upon the protection that the State affords. Take away all the wealth that could not have come into existence but for the action of the State, and the whole population would be plunged into the direst poverty; destitution and misery would reign far and wide and our elaborate civilisation would relapse into savagery. In promoting, therefore, a tube railway to Golder's Green, the State is doing nothing special; it is only performing its ordinary function of facilitating the working of the energies and desires of its citizens. It is not directly creating value, but it is giving full play to that power of demand which does create value, just as in a thousand other modes it clears the way for the operation of economic forces and so ministers to the production of wealth. The making of the railway, no more than anything else, gives ground for sustaining a special and peculiar claim by the State on the value of the land at Golder's Green.

It seems, therefore, evident that the claim of the people, either as users or as an organised community, to appropriate either all the value of land or any particular increment in that

value because they have created it and are therefore entitled to a share of it different from what they can fairly claim in respect to anything else, is a pure delusion. The strange thing is that it should have taken so firm a hold on the minds of many people. But they have probably been misled by the error discussed some pages back, that people sometimes deserve what they own because they have earned it, and sometimes do not deserve it because it has come to them irrespective of their deserts. Naturally, in the light of that opinion, the gains derived from the increased value of land in the neighbourhood of great cities seem a striking example of undeserved wealth. But if it be once realised that the forces that make wealth are never ethical, and that the gains made by lending any possession, whether it be land or money or anything else, are equally unearned, and that even those gains that depend upon exertion do not correspond to desert, the whole conception expressed in the phrase "unearned increment" is cut up by the roots. All property is seen to be on the same moral level, as something acquired without injustice, that is to say, without fraud or violence, but not meritoriously so that the owner's title may rest on his virtues. And special taxation on land cannot be justified nor any similar special tax: for such taxes assume distinctions

in the relation of the community to the property concerned where no distinctions exist.

It may be objected that this is to argue that, because things are on a bad footing, therefore the State ought not to try to make it better. Even though, it may be said, the exchangeable or pecuniary value of acquisitions depends altogether on supply and demand and has no ethical basis, that is only a reason the more for discarding exchangeable value together with the competitive system that has created it, and falling back upon a conception of value which is better because it is ethical. Whatever may actually happen, the gains of extortion, of vice, of folly, ought not to be on the same level as the gains of those who harmlessly but without effort, put their possessions out for hire. Nor ought the gains of these harmless but idle persons to be on the same level as the gains of self-sacrificing toil and industry. It may be true that as long as the competitive system exists, supply and demand will take their course, and wealth will not depend upon merit, but that is no reason why the legislator and the tax-gatherer should not have in mind a nobler standard of reward. Especially in imposing taxes the State can keep in view the real deserts of various classes of the community, and can seek to throw the burdens

that must be thrown somewhere, most on those who deserve least the esteem of the community.

This sounds a very attractive conception of the function of the State, but it is in fact to set the State to perform a task which is beyond its powers. The State lacks adequate knowledge for the purpose and could not obtain it, because it would be altogether impossible to examine into the origin of all the property in the country, and to determine how far the method of its acquisition had been deserving or otherwise. The State must therefore fall back on existing categories of classification. And the categories which it would have to use for the purposes of drawing the distinctions desired were not constructed in respect to merit and do not correspond to it. This has already been shown in respect to the categories "earned" and "unearned." It is equally true in other cases. For instance, lending money is one of the categories into which the acquisition of wealth may be divided. But money-lenders differ infinitely in desert. A banker conducting a perfectly innocent and very useful business makes money by lending, as much as a usurer who entices the foolish to borrow on exorbitant terms, and preys upon them relentlessly in their incapacity to fulfil their engagements. Again, one manufacturer makes his profits con-

sistently with paying his workpeople a good wage, and conducting every detail of his bargain with them not merely equitably, but kindly. Another employer, not to be distinguished by legal classification, forces the hardest terms upon his workpeople, and is relentlessly harsh in exacting the utmost claims the law gives him against them. Similarly landowners, in making and enforcing the contracts on which they let their land, differ in almost infinite degrees of merit. To tax, therefore, according to desert would be impossible, and would be admitted to be impossible if people could once rid their minds of the notion that in the economic forces which create exchangeable value ethical distinctions can be traced and made the basis of differences of taxation. The categories of "earned" and "unearned" wealth are, as has been shown, as unsound a basis for taxation according to desert as the categories of landowners or employers or money-lenders would be. Taxation according to merit can seem possible only to the confused in thought.

Nor really, pleasing though it seems that the State should support righteousness and discountenance its opposite, can such a duty be properly imposed upon it. The distinction between vice and crime is there to remind us that the State has been taught by experience to refrain from acting as a moral censor. And

yet if it were the duty of the State to hold a general moral assize and reward the deserving and punish the undeserving, it would be better to do it not by taxation, but directly by inflicting penalties and assigning benefits according to degrees of virtue or vice. To use taxation for such a purpose is to introduce a dangerous element of confusion. For since the larger the sum which can be drawn by taxation from one person or class the less need be taken from other persons or classes, taxation according to merit would induce every one to try and convict those whose circumstances were different of some moral error or deficiency, in order that a portion of the national burden might be shifted on to them. Lord Macaulay in his *History* tells a story which is full of instruction as to the dangers of turning the punishment of wrong-doing into a source of funds for the Exchequer. In the reign of King William III there was in the public service a very wealthy man named Duncombe, who was guilty of malversation of public money. The House of Commons, in the course of some examinations into financial affairs, came upon a trace of his irregularities. Duncombe, who was a Member of the House, lost his head and was betrayed into making indiscreet admissions which convicted him of fraud and suborning forgery. As the law then stood it was doubt-

ful if he was guilty of any legal offence, and it was decided not to prosecute him ; but the indignation of the House of Commons was profoundly excited by the spectacle of a man immensely rich and shamefully dishonest. Accordingly, a special Bill of Pains and Penalties was introduced to deprive him of two-thirds of his property and to transfer it to the Exchequer. The measure transgressed the principle, generally recognised as essential to justice, that none should be punished by a retrospective penal law. Duncombe was to be subjected to a punishment of which he had no notice when he committed the offence. The State was to punish him for doing that of which, according to law, he could not be convicted. But the Bill had also, as Macaulay points out, a peculiarly dangerous aspect by reason of the use that was to be made of the wealth taken from Duncombe. The sum was so large that it would have considerably relieved taxation for that year.

" His property was supposed to amount to considerably more than four hundred thousand pounds. Two-thirds of that property were equivalent to about sevenpence in the pound on the rental of the kingdom as assessed to the land tax. If, therefore, two-thirds of that property could have been brought into the Exchequer, the land tax for 1699, a burden

most painfully felt by the class which had the chief power in England, might have been reduced from three shillings to two and fivepence. Every squire of a thousand a year in the House of Commons would have had thirty pounds more to spend; and that sum might well have made to him the whole difference between being at ease and being pinched during twelve months. If the Bill had passed, if the gentry and yeomanry of the kingdom had found it was possible for them to obtain a welcome remission of taxation by imposing on a Shylock or an Overreach, by a retrospective law, a fine not heavier than his misconduct might, in a moral view, seem to have deserved, it is impossible to believe that they would not soon have recurred to so simple and agreeable a resource. In every age it is easy to find rich men who have done bad things for which the law has provided no punishment or an inadequate punishment. The estates of such men would soon have been considered as a fund applicable to the public service. As often as it was necessary to vote an extraordinary supply to the Crown, the Committee of Ways and Means would have looked about for some unpopular capitalist to plunder. Appetite would have grown with indulgence. Accusations would have been eagerly welcomed. Rumours and suspicions would have been

received as proofs. The wealth of the great goldsmiths of the Royal Exchange would have become as insecure as that of a Jew under the Plantagenets, as that of a Christian under a Turkish Pasha. Rich men would have tried to invest their acquisitions in some form in which they could lie closely hidden and could be speedily removed. In no long time it would have been found that of all financial resources the least productive is robbery, and that the public had really paid far more dearly for Duncombe's hundreds of thousands than if it had borrowed them at fifty per cent." (Chap. xxiii).

Now taxation according to the merit of the taxpayer has something of the character of the proceeding against Duncombe. It would be in effect a system of pains and penalties. These penalties would be inflicted on individuals for acts or conduct which, even if immoral or discreditable, have never been reckoned criminal, and the taxes would be tainted with the injustice which belong to retrospective punishment. And such taxation would have the additional evil, so well expounded by Macaulay, that it would make it the interest of the more numerous classes of taxpayers to seek out cases of misconduct in order to justify penal taxes, the fruits of which would go to relieve themselves. A fiscal policy which sought to put the national

burdens as much as possible on the shoulders of the undeserving rich because of their lack of virtue, would be to perpetrate on a great scale, and with much smaller provocation, the error which Macaulay so severely censures in the House of Commons of 1698. Yet such a policy cannot be said to be impossible. Already we see statesmen, if not imposing taxes for the sake of punishing faults, at any rate justifying taxes because they incidentally do punish persons guilty of unpopular misconduct. It cannot be denied that recent taxes imposed on the licensed victualling trade have been partly recommended by the strong feeling excited against that trade as one which profits by the vices of the people. And in the famous speech which Mr. Lloyd George delivered at Limehouse, he defended his proposed land taxes by charging a certain landowner with having been guilty of blackmail. Here we seem to approach very close to the point of view of the House of Commons which endeavoured to fine Duncombe. There are doubtless great differences between a general enactment imposing a tax of one-fifth of future gains, and a special bill imposing a fine of two-thirds of a man's whole property. But the essential vice of inflicting a punishment on those who have never been convicted of any offence by law, and of making the fruits of that punishment profitable to the com-

munity, are common to the two cases. To tax a class specially is to punish them; to punish except for crime is unjust; and to commit injustice in order to profit by it is dishonest. It can hardly be doubted that if Parliament proceeds further to consider not the capacity of taxpayers to bear taxes, but their deserts calling for punishment, it will ultimately find the truth of Macaulay's saying that of all financial resources the least productive is robbery.

Our survey, then, of the principles underlying the right of private property, and the relation of the State, especially in its function of tax-gatherer, to property, leads to the conclusion that it is impossible for the State equitably to distinguish between one kind of property and another, either on the principle that its economic value is earned or unearned, or on the general principle that it has been acquired more or less meritoriously. All property appears to have an equal claim on the respect of the State, and neither in taxation nor in other acts of State can distinctions be fairly drawn between one owner of property and another. But this does not affect the consideration of the principles on which the State may interfere with any right of property, nor those on which it ought to distribute the burden of taxation. It would be impossible in the present work to state

except in outline what ought to guide State action in interfering in relation to property. The most important principle is that it should act towards classes as it certainly would act towards individuals, and make no requirement which an honest man would feel it impossible to justify to his conscience if it were a demand made by one individual upon another, instead of a community upon a class. It is singular and deserves notice that, whereas Liberal politicians and publicists are honourably scrupulous about accepting the argument that national acts in respect to foreign countries cannot be judged according to the strict standards of Christian morals, but may fall back on what is called "reason of State," they do not appear to see that just similar scruples may be invoked in respect to national acts of taxation or legislation infringing the private rights of citizens. The same conscience which denounces "reason of State" as a justification for the partition of Poland or the annexation of Silesia ought to think twice before it approves proposals which, in one form or another, aim at transferring property from one set of citizens to another on the pretence of the needs of revenue or the exigencies of social reform. "Reason of State" is as good or as bad an argument in the one case as the other.

Yet it may be rejoined that, after all, the expenditure of the State must be met some-

how, and that taxes must be levied on some people, and may most properly be levied on those who can bear them best. So stated, this seems true and reasonable. But two cautions must be borne in mind. First it must be proved that the grounds for incurring expenditure are sufficiently strong to justify the particular taxation that that expenditure makes necessary. Expenditure ought never to be considered apart from the taxes which will be required to meet it. And while expenditure which is in the strict sense necessary for the national existence, such as expenditure to secure the country against foreign invasion, or to defray the cost of indispensable services like the administration of justice, police, public health and other general purposes, may be charged wherever it can be borne with least sacrifice, expenditure which is in effect paying money out of the Exchequer not to benefit the whole community, but to relieve the wants of particular classes, however real those wants may be, ought to be met by taxes which the whole community pays. If this rule be not observed, it is plain that what is done in the form of money voted for social amelioration and taxes raised on wealthy classes is in reality only the transference of property from one set of people to another. It is to do under very thin veils what no one would defend doing nakedly. No one would

justify a bill enacting that every one possessing wealth equal to a million pounds should be deprived of half his property and the fund so collected distributed in the form of pensions among persons engaged in employments earning less than thirty shillings a week. This would be rightly called confiscating the property of a small number of rich men and giving it to a large number of poor men. But it differs only in degree from any scheme of social reform for the benefit of poor people which is financed wholly or even mainly out of the pockets of the rich. If expenditure for the benefit of particular classes is to be honest, it is essential that it should be separated in the national accounts from the expenditure which is in the interest of all the community, and that the taxes levied to meet this partial expenditure shall be such as are felt by the whole body of citizens. If this precaution be not taken, philanthropy will soon degenerate into thieving.

In addition to this requirement in respect to expenditure, it is necessary also to set some limit to the proportion of his property which any individual ought to be required to give to the expenses of the State. Taxation is distinguished from confiscation only in degree. Raise the income tax from a shilling in the pound to ten shillings in the pound, and you deprive all persons subject to the tax of half

their income; raise it, again, to twenty shillings in the pound and you take away all that they have. The difficulty is at what point to draw the line and say, "Here taxation ends and confiscation begins." Sound principles of taxation may for the want of such a limit be pressed to the point of injustice. It seems a sound principle that taxes ought to be levied so as to involve an equal sacrifice on the part of every taxpayer. But this might be made by a plausible argument to justify depriving every one who had more than twice the average income of the whole population of half his income rather than impose any tax on those who had less than the average income. It might be urged that those who were taxed were still left better off than those who were spared taxation, and that therefore the sacrifice required of those taxed was not so great as even the slightest tax upon those spared. But it is plain that to deprive a person of half his income is not to tax him, but to inflict on him a very heavy fine. Most men would prefer to incur a substantial term of imprisonment rather than to pay such a tax. Evidently, then, there must be some maximum limit of the proportion of a man's property taken by taxation beyond which no tax, even in the case of the richest taxpayers, ought to go. Wanting this limit, taxation may develop into robbery.

But where is the line to be drawn? Our ancestors saw, I suppose, the difficulty; but they did not draw a line, they laid down a principle. They were well aware that taxes might become engines of confiscation when they insisted that no tax should be imposed except by the consent of the class of taxpayers who paid it. When the House of Commons first came into being, society was comparatively simple in structure. Taxes could only be levied on two main categories of people: those whose wealth depended on the land, and those who acquired it by trade and commerce in the towns. Accordingly the representative system of Simon de Montfort and Edward I required representatives to be sent to Parliament to give the assent of the landed and mercantile classes, the first through the Knights of the Shire, the second through the Burgesses of the boroughs. This consent was the safeguard against oppression. Individuals might be coerced, but not classes. For while a selfish or captious individual might resist a reasonable tax, a class would only withhold their approval for some grave reason, either as to the policy for which expenditure was required, or (which is to our present purpose) because the amount of the tax was intolerably heavy. Confiscation was thus effectually guarded against: no class will assent to the confiscation of its property.

The problem where to draw the line above which taxation must not go was solved by the maxim "no taxation without representation."

That venerable maxim is still quoted with admiration and invoked as one of the fundamental principles of liberty. But it may be doubted whether in its true significance it is still in effective force. Taxes on land, for instance, have recently been imposed which had not the consent of the owners of land, but encountered their strenuous resistance; and in fiscal discussions it is regarded as entirely legitimate that the more numerous classes who are poor should impose taxation on the less numerous classes who are rich. Yet it is difficult to see how this consists with the principle "no taxation without representation." It certainly does not so consist if we understand the principle to imply that every class should consent to its own taxation. And if we do not so understand the principle, it is not easy to see why Edward I thought it necessary to summon not only Knights of the Shire but Burgesses from the boroughs in order that each might consent to the taxes to be levied. Why indeed did he convoke a House of Commons at all? It was not more inherently unjust for the nobles to tax the commons than it is now for a less wealthy majority to tax a more wealthy minority. The injustice, if there be any, is the same in

both cases: it depends on the absence of the taxpayer's consent. But probably we have departed too far from the principles which watched round the cradle of English liberty to press the doctrine of the taxpayer's consent as far as it would have been pressed in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. If, however, we lay aside as unattainable the complete security against oppression which is furnished by the consent of each class being necessary to the taxes levied upon it, we ought to find some other safeguard which will preserve us from the grave danger that taxes may be increased until they become confiscatory. It would be to go beyond the scope of this book to formulate a political programme. It is enough here to call attention to the essential importance of distinguishing between taxation and confiscation, if private property is to be preserved from attack.

Subject to these reservations, Conservatives as well as Liberals may recognise as the normal principle of taxation that it should be levied in proportion to the capacity of the taxpayer to bear it. Taxation only begins to invade the rights of private property when either it is levied on one portion of the community in order to be spent for the benefit of another portion, or when it is so high that it cannot be reasonably distinguished from a pecuniary fine. There are many other

questions which arise in respect to taxation, but these are not concerned with the right of private property or the claim of justice that it raises. They are in fact questions of policy, not questions of justice. Conservatism ought not to be, and at its best is not, the cause of rich people, but it ought to be the cause of the defence of property against unjust treatment. It ought to be so, not only because property is an institution required for the sake of the common good, but also because the owners of it, like other human beings, are entitled to be guarded against undeserved injury. The paths of justice and ultimate expediency always lie side by side, and the conception that measures of social amelioration can wisely be founded on wrong is not less mistaken than immoral. But this more general question will be better considered in another chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

It was asked of old, "Did the owl come out of the egg or the egg out of the owl?" Which is first, the embryo out of which the perfect organism is evolved, or the perfect organism from which is born the embryo? A somewhat similar question might be put about the State and the individual. Are we to think of the State a something built up by individuals for their own ends, like a house in which they may dwell, or a temple in which they may serve God? If so, we are face to face with the difficulty that the individual as we know him is largely the creation of the State. Not only almost all his wealth, but much of what is closer to his personality, depends upon the action of the State. 'It is the State and what depends on the State, that makes the difference between civilisation and savagery.' Without the State, therefore, physical health would have to conform to quite different conditions, and intellectual cultivation would scarcely exist at all. Probably the great majority of the population have become by long ages of

civilised life, in which they and their forefathers for many generations have lived, too weakly to stand the strain and the exposure which would be involved by a return to barbarism or even to the conditions of the first stages of national progress. The rise in the standard of comfort has been so great that what were deemed comforts or even luxuries are now necessaries indispensable to life and health. The hardiest labourer could not now live as a Saxon noble used to do. And men are not only less robust, they are also dependent for the conditions of existence on complicated and artificial organisation. Such events as the recent railway strike bring home to us how essentially artificial the existence of a civilised man is. Highly organised means of communication are only one part of what has grown up under the protection and superintendence of the State. Yet if these means of communication be interrupted for even a short time, the greater part of the population is in danger of actual starvation, and the hindrance and injury to trade and commerce defy reckoning and almost imagination. Nor is it only the material resources upon which human life depends over which the State and its civilising action exert a powerful influence. The mind itself is largely formed and guided by the environment of civilisation. If we could

imagine ourselves transported back to some ruder age when civilisation was still undeveloped and incomplete, we should find the roughness of surroundings producing a harshness and coarseness in human nature, to our temperaments almost intolerable. Doubtless there would be some counterbalancing elements of strength and virtue which tend to die away in circumstances of luxury. But the experience would make it impossible to deny that ordinary human nature has been very deeply affected by the security and amenity of civilisation, and that therefore mankind can truly be said to have been changed even in its inner being by the consequences of State action. Yet to this general proposition an important reservation must be made. It is true that if we look at humanity in the large, if we think of the ordinary man, we must rate the power of the State and of civilisation very high. But if we look at individual character at its best, even in uncivilised surroundings, we find ourselves in the presence of something in creating which the State plays no part, of an unearthly element in human character which even in the least favourable circumstances, transcending all mundane hindrances, achieves amidst the rudest savagery as amidst the most finished culture, the shining splendour of a saint. But with this exception, which affects

the spiritual rather than the mental or physical side of human nature, we may say that the well-being of mankind so largely depends on the action of the State that one might almost decide that the State makes the individual.

And yet the opposite theory is more obvious and not less true. It is plain that historically the individual is prior to the State, and that he slowly developed the State in order to meet his needs. It is plain also that even to-day the individuals who form a State not only consciously work its mechanism, but less consciously determine by the influence of their characters the general mental and moral atmosphere that prevails in the community. The State is in short the sum of the individuals who make it up, if it be thought of either as an instrument ministering to human needs or as creating an environment in which human character develops. And actually, not merely from age to age, but from year to year and even from month to month, the social life of a community changes with the changing standard that prevails in the region of individual virtue, self-control and responsibility.

So far, we seem equally able to follow unanswerable lines of argument leading in different, if not opposite, directions. But if we think of the subject in a less abstract vein and mainly with a view of solving the problems of politics, we come upon a consideration

which is of crucial practical importance. In many respects, as we have seen, the individual is as much derived from the State as the State is from the individual. His health and strength, his mental outlook, even so much of his character as depends on environment, have been largely affected by what the State has done. But there is a centre of spiritual life in human nature which lies beyond the sphere of the State. And this life has sometimes power to be independent of all surrounding conditions. Almost everything in the mind and the body have been modified by civilisation; but examples of human virtue and sanctity are to be found in circumstances untouched by the hand of the State as they are in the most civilised surroundings. Very few citizens of London to-day, depending for their wealth, their sustenance and their mental atmosphere on what the State does and has done, are better or so good as St. John the Baptist who lived in the wilderness and fed on locusts and wild honey. This is indeed only an illustration of what has earlier been pointed out, that the spiritual life of a Christian is essentially individual, and that, though it expresses itself in political and social action, it exists and is subject to the power of grace only within the individual soul. When, therefore, we are judging, as we are bound to do, political action by a moral

standard, the State has to conform to the individual's code. We are obliged to regard the State as an aggregation of individuals acting in accordance with the moral obligations which control those individuals. We feel obliged to reject "reason of State," whether in home or foreign affairs, if by that expression is meant the supersession in matters of State of the ordinary obligations of individuals by another moral code. We find we must decide all moral issues, and therefore ultimately all the fundamental principles of politics, by reference to individual duty. Morality is an individual matter, and this gives a primacy to the individual over the State. To adapt a well-known phrase to a new purpose: the individual is the sun and the State is the moon which shines with borrowed light.

And the principle that the action of the State must be judged by the canons of morality which apply to individuals will carry us further. It follows that the State, no more than any individual in the State, may inflict injustice on any one. It must not indeed be assumed that the duty of the State to an individual is in all respects the same as of one individual to another. This is not because the individual owes much to the State. For neither by the State nor by an individual can the right to do wrong

be acquired. No man can get a licence to injure another by doing good to him for a long period of time. No father, for example, is entitled to murder his son or even to ill-treat him because he has through long years nourished and educated him. Morality knows nothing of exchange. There is no savings bank of morals where one may accumulate kindness with a view of drawing out an equivalent in injustice when it may be convenient. The true ground for distinguishing between the moral obligations of the State and those of a single individual is that the State is acting in the interest of others, while the individual is acting in his own interest. The State is in the position of a trustee of the interests of the whole community, the individual acts for himself alone. It is truly said, therefore, that the State must have regard to the common good, and that the common good is the standard by which its policy must be judged. But this is not a proposition to be accepted without reserve. The State as a trustee acting for others may, and indeed must, prefer the good of the community to the good of any individual or minority. But it may not, any more than an honest trustee, inflict injustice in the interest of those for whom it acts. To put an extreme case: suppose it were shown that the interests of medicine would be greatly assisted by ex-

periments in vivisection upon a human being, no consideration of the advantage to the common good, however great that advantage might be, would justify the State in vivisecting one of its citizens. We should recoil in horror from such a proposal even if the victim were a criminal, but much more if he were an innocent man. And similarly no advantage to the common good would justify the State in putting an innocent man to death or imprisoning him or fining him. To punish the innocent in the interest of the community is immoral and cannot be justified. And if the State may not punish an innocent man, neither may it inflict upon such a man what is in reality a punishment by disguising it under another name. A pecuniary fine does not cease to be an injustice because it is called a tax or a readjustment of property. It is an injury; and the principle by which the State must be guided is the simple one that it is immoral to inflict an injury upon an innocent man. When, therefore, it is said that the State must act for the common good, that proposition must be subject to the reservation that State action must not in any case be immoral, and that to injure innocent people is immoral.

It is possible that some minds have been misled into adopting the unsound theory that the State may balance the benefits it has

conferred by equivalent injuries, from a mistaken conception of justice. Justice is often spoken of as though it depended on an element of equality. The idea of a balance, one of the symbols by which Justice is traditionally delineated, is made the essence of the virtue; and cases of justice or injustice are discussed as though they were essentially matters of weighing right against right, claim against claim. But this is not so. Inequality is indeed often a useful sign by which injustice may be detected, but it is never the essence of injustice. There may be circumstances in which inequality is an injustice. It is so in a game, because the convention under which games are played is that the rules are to be applied equally to all players. Any player, therefore, who is unequally treated is deprived of a right of which he has been assured: a breach of faith has taken place. Similarly in the administration of law by the Courts, inequality of treatment implies injustice because, since there can only be one right way of administering law, if law is differently administered to different persons it must in some cases be wrongly administered, and an injury inflicted or a right withheld. If A. and B. are differently treated when before a Court of Law, they cannot both be rightly treated. Strictly speaking, this test of justice might better be called identity of treatment

than equality of treatment; for the point is that there cannot be two right ways of administration, and a difference therefore indicates that one person is being dealt with in a wrong way. But though in these instances and in others it is convenient to look out for inequality as a sign of injustice, the essence of injustice must be otherwise defined. Injustice consists in the infliction of undeserved injury or the withholding of a benefit rightfully belonging. To repay benefits by benefits is not an obligation of justice but of gratitude; and to refuse such return of benefits is not dishonest but unkind. It is therefore to mistake the nature of justice to seek to cast a balance between the individual and the State and to estimate that the State ought in justice to get as much out of the individual as it gives, or an equal amount from all individuals. Nor is it required by justice that each individual should receive from the State in proportion to what he has done for the State. Justice only requires that no one should be injured or cheated. It is in truth fortunate that justice does not require an equal exchange of benefits between the State and the individual, or that the State should render to and receive from all individuals in equal measure. For it lies altogether beyond the wit of man to achieve such equality of treatment. The State's

duty is far simpler. It is to render to every individual as much good as it can, consistently with its duty to other individuals, and strictly to refrain from inflicting undeserved injury on any. Or in other words, the State must seek the good of the whole community and the good of every individual who is a member of it, but subject to the condition that it must never be guilty of the injustice of inflicting an injury, unless as the punishment of crime.

But let us go on to enquire how far the principles of Conservatism are concerned to determine in a particular sense the functions of the State. It is often assumed that Conservatism and Socialism are directly opposed. But this is not completely true. Modern Conservatism inherits the traditions of Toryism which are favourable to the activity and authority of the State. Indeed Mr. Herbert Spencer attacked Socialism as being in fact the revival of Toryism; he called it "the new Toryism." And he was so far right, that Toryism was on the side of authority and that it was rather the Whigs, and still more the Liberals of the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, who insisted on the dangers of State interference and the importance of the liberty of the individual. Both the central government and the local power of squire and parson were, in earlier times,

inclined to what we should now call "paternal government," and had no sympathy with the unrestricted working of competition or the principles of "laissez faire." That authority should relieve suffering; that it should control and regulate trade; that it should restrain luxury; that it should suppress vice; that it should maintain religious truth:—these were principles which appealed to our forefathers as reasonable and especially to those among them who were Tories. And in the nineteenth century, when Liberalism enforced to the utmost the principle of personal liberty, it was among Conservatives that the authority and control of the State was defended and in some instances enlarged and strengthened. These controversies play to this day so important a part in politics that we may select for special consideration the attitude of Conservatism towards the duty of the State in respect to two great regions of policy: the relief of suffering and the regulation of trade—subjects which are now familiar to us under the catch titles "Social Reform" and "Tariff Reform."

What is the duty of the State in respect to the relief of suffering? A more difficult question can scarcely be asked in political discussion; and it is not too much to say that no political party has thought out any general principles on which to base an answer.

Historically the principle was adopted that every one must be saved from death by starvation or exposure, but that on the other hand no one ought to be supported by the State in idleness. This was the policy of Elizabeth's famous Act establishing the Poor Law. Nor is it unfair to claim the Poor Law as at any rate of Tory extraction. It was imposed by religious sentiment, and it was the solution of a difficulty caused by an attack on the Church. It arose out of the suffering which had been occasioned by the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, and by the consequent cessation of the relief of the poor which the monasteries had been wont to give. Under the Poor Law the State took over the work that had formerly been performed by the alms of the Church; and in so doing the State acted under the moral ascendency of Church teaching.

It must be remembered, in passing, that the Poor Law was only the more amiable part of the Tudor policy in dealing with poverty. The severer side is to be found in the laws against vagrancy, and these to our notions were terribly cruel. No one was to be permitted to be idle, and the punishment of vagrancy was in the first instance cruel flogging and ultimately death itself. The plan was certainly what we should call socialistic, though after a kind of socialism

by no means popular. Not only the right to work but the duty to work was enforced. The workhouse was meant to be just what its name implies, a place where men were made to work. It was a place of refuge from destitution, but it was also a place of servitude for the workless man, who was assumed to be without employment from idleness rather than from misfortune. This mixed system of national charity to the suffering and national severity to those who were supposed to be idle has come down to our own time, though with many changes and mitigations. It is worth analysing to ascertain what are the principles that underlie it.

It cannot be doubted that originally the relief of the poor was based on the duty of Christian charity and not on any supposed right in justice. The State was to feed the hungry because that is a Christian duty. No thought, we may be sure, entered the minds of Elizabeth and her Parliament that men had a right to be supported by the State as a matter of justice. They were concerned to perform the Christian work of almsgiving. But it is now maintained that the Poor Law ought to be defended and upheld because it is required by justice and not only by charity, that citizens of a State should not be left to starve. This raises a question of far-reaching interest and importance, for if we can answer

it clearly, we shall find that many other social problems can be unravelled by the same clue.

The claim of justice is certainly an attractive one. It may be urged that an honest man, leading a blameless life, labouring to the best of his ability and so far as opportunity will allow, may, through no fault of his own, through pure misfortune, be reduced to absolute destitution and, lacking the assistance of others, may starve. And it may then be asked whether it would be just that he should be left to his fate, and that nothing should be done for him by the community in which he had lived and to whom his virtuous and laborious life had been a benefit. That it would be intolerably cruel that he should be left to his fate, that it would be an iniquity shameful to the community, a high offence against the laws of Heaven, is most true. But it may be doubted whether this wickedness would be, strictly speaking, an injustice. The cruel State that leaves a man to starve does not actively injure him. The only question is, does it withhold from him something to which he is entitled? I find it hard to argue that it does. The State never expressly nor by implication has contracted (in the supposed case) to save the man from starving. It breaks to him no promise, for no promise has been made. It owes to him

no duty, unless we adopt the theory that the rendering of services in itself constitutes a claim for some equivalent, although they have been rendered without contract or stipulation. But should we say that a man is bound in justice to make a return for service which he has never promised to reward? I think not. Certainly no Court of Law would enforce a claim made in respect to even the greatest services unless some promise, expressed or implied, had passed. Even if one man saved the life of another, he would not be able to exact by force of law the smallest reward for what he had done. In the eye of the law justice does not require that one man should be grateful to another or that one man should be charitable to another; it only requires that one man should keep faith with another. It is unjust to break a promise: it is unjust to inflict an injury, but to fail in uncovenanted gratitude is not unjust, and the law accordingly gives no remedy against ingratitude. Applying the same rule to the relations of the State and the starving man, it seems plain that the services that the man has rendered to the community constitute no claim in justice for relief. As already pointed out, the idea of equality, of a fair equivalent being due for good done, is only part of the conception of justice under certain conventional conditions, as in the playing of a game. Where there is

no convention, where there is, that is to say, no implied promise, neglect to help the deserving or the suffering, however cruel or however ungrateful, is not unjust.

This conclusion seems strong in argument, but it cannot be denied that it involves some difficult consequences. It involves the consequence that the relief afforded by the Poor Law is not a payment due to justice, and therefore must be defended upon some other ground or else abandoned. Every one feels that its abandonment would be morally intolerable. How, then, can it be justified? If we say that poor relief is national charity, we are exposed to two difficulties. The first is that charity ought not to be, and indeed cannot be consistently with its own character, compulsory. And secondly, that it is not easy to see why you should draw the line at mere relief from destitution, since charity would certainly require more than that. To these objections it may be answered that poor relief is, in fact, certainly given by the State from compassionate motives. No one can doubt that if the community had felt itself exempt from the obligations of charity, the Poor Law Act would never have passed, or if it had passed, would never have been maintained. It has been maintained, and probably is still, because the community is too compassionate to abandon it. How can

we, then, defend making the community compulsorily incur a compassionate payment? Is there not a moral absurdity in coercing human beings to give alms?

We may answer this question by turning our minds back to what has been said in connection with the establishment of religion. It was then pointed out that no difficulty about Establishment arose or could arise as long as every one was of the same religious opinion. Even the older and stricter conception of Establishment was not unjustifiable (although probably inexpedient) as long as this uniformity of religious opinion existed. There was nothing inherently oppressive in requiring every one to attend public worship, for example, as long as the only reasons for non-attendance were not conscientious disagreement but indolence or negligence. But at the present time, while there is no uniformity of religious opinion, there is uniformity of opinion in respect to some of the obligations of Christian morals. Amongst these universally recognised obligations is the obligation of relieving extreme poverty and destitution. Our country is not inhabited by a community of Churchmen nor even by a community of believing Christians, but it is inhabited by a community unanimously agreed as to the moral obligation of relieving the poor. Compulsion, therefore, is not in-

admissible to carry out what every one agrees to be right by overcoming the confessedly indefensible neglect of those who without compulsion might fail to pay the poor rate. It is true that those who pay poor rate only because they are obliged to do so are doing no act of charity. But the nation in its corporate capacity cannot fairly be hindered from carrying out its charitable purpose because some individuals, falling below the moral standard which is universally recognised, may be unwilling to make the payment required. If there were conscientious dissent from paying poor rate, if the nation had lost uniformity of moral opinion, the compulsory levying of poor rate could not be justified by this argument. But as long as the nation is unanimous in recognising the moral duty of relieving the poor, it is as much entitled to carry out a charitable purpose approved by all its citizens, notwithstanding the reluctance of some to conform to the standard of duty from which they do not conscientiously dissent, as to carry out any other plan of public policy.

Poor relief may also be justified more simply as being expedient, and therefore on the same footing as national defence or any other kind of public expenditure. It certainly would be unwise, even if it were not inhuman, to leave destitution unrelieved. To allow

a part of the population to become desperate would be to encourage crime and violence, to weaken the authority of law and to imperil the stability of social order. This is in reason a very strong argument; but its weakness is that it is certainly not the argument which really upholds the Poor Law. No one who attentively considers the matter can doubt that the Poor Law is in fact supported from compassionate motives as a system of national charity. The great extensions of State assistance to suffering persons which are contained in the Old Age Pensions Act, and the recent measure for National Insurance, must be defended in the same way, unless indeed more reliance is put on another consideration. It may ingeniously, but perhaps not quite convincingly, be argued that though no claim in justice can be made upon the State to give help to deserving persons in need in their old age or during sickness or disablement, a reasonable claim for gratitude may be put forward. As has been pointed out, no one by saving the life of his friend becomes entitled in justice to any benefit at the friend's hands, but he does become entitled in gratitude. There is no injury inflicted by a neglect to reward, but there would certainly be grave ingratitude in refusing help to one from whom so great a benefit had been received. Similarly the State may be said to

be ungrateful to deserving and indigent men and women if it leaves them without a pension in their old age or without help in their infirmities. Gratitude is not precisely the same thing as either charity or justice, but it partakes in some respects of the character of both. We speak of "owing a debt of gratitude" and the like; but such expressions are really only figurative, since there is none of the exactness of reckoning in gratitude which belongs to the idea of an obligation of justice, none of the sense that deliberately to withhold the payment of a debt is an act of theft or dishonesty. On the other hand gratitude is, in much the same sense as pity, akin to love; and though it is not in itself charity, it blends with it, and often cannot be in practice distinguished from it.

The duty of the State, then, to give assistance to those that suffer may be regarded either as a matter of national charity, or of national gratitude, or as a matter of mere expediency. And on none of the three grounds has Conservatism any reluctance to support the policy. The influence of gratitude and of expediency are felt in common by all those who wish well to their country, and the argument from charity appeals certainly not least to the party that inherits the religious tradition of Toryism. The only aspect in which these matters can bring

Conservatism into conflict with other bodies of opinion is if they are made the occasion of establishing the doctrine that every one has a claim on the State in proportion to the services he has rendered to it. If only a claim of gratitude is put forward, no exactness of proportion comes in question at all. But if the claim is one of justice, and be admitted as such, a foundation is at once laid on which the fabric of a complete system of State socialism might be erected. For it is clear that if the question be one of justice, the sufferings of those who claim State help are irrelevant. A creditor is neither more nor less a creditor because he is a poor man needing the payment of his debt. It is as unjust to rob a millionaire as it is a beggar. Justice knows nothing of any special claim arising from distress. If, then, we pay Old Age Pensions as a due justly owed on account of the services rendered by the recipients of such pensions, we ought to pay it to all old people from the richest to the poorest. If we give a State subvention to those insured against sickness because such a subvention is their just right in consideration of their services, then we must not limit the subvention to those who have less than £160 a year, but must give it to every one. If we recoil from this conclusion, we must find some new reason to justify our reluct-

ance. And such a reason would be offered to us in the doctrine that rich people are already paid for their services by the riches which, under the State's protection and through the State's assistance, they enjoy. If the State owes them nothing, it owes them nothing because it has already paid them. But if they are paid, most at any rate are also over-paid. And this is actually the position maintained. Property comes to be thought something which is essentially belonging to the State but which has, by indulgence or from neglect, been allowed to pass into the possession of individuals as an extravagant payment for what they do for the community. The final stage is then reached, and schemes of taxation and readjustment of property are foreshadowed in order to reach the ideal that every one should have what their services are thought to deserve and no more.

There seem to be three flaws in this logical structure. First, it is untrue that there is any obligation in justice upon the State to render to the individual an equivalent for what the individual has rendered to the State. Secondly, it is equally mistaken to suppose that there is any obligation in justice on the individual to render to the State an equivalent for what he has received from the State. These two errors both depend on the

mistaken conception of justice that regards it as keeping an account between various persons and rendering to each value for value received. Inequality, as already pointed out, suggests injustice but does not prove it; and in this case inequality would only be a true sign of injustice if it could be traced to the action of the State and was in effect the scar of an injury. To assume, therefore, that an unequal measure of prosperity in individuals indicates that the State must have inflicted injustice somewhere, is to assume that there can be no other explanation of the inequality except some injurious act of the State. But in fact, it is notorious that the vast inequalities that exist in human nature and in the opportunities which fortune throws in the way of different human beings, are quite sufficient to account for the inequalities in the resulting distribution of wealth. The claim of justice of the individual against the State or of the State against the individual for benefits rendered, breaks down because there is no obligation to make an unpromised return for benefits, and no injustice can be proved or even plausibly suggested merely on the ground that some persons have prospered under the hand of the State much more than others. A third objection touches the same weakness from the practical side. Even if the claim of a right to equivalence between

the benefits mutually rendered by the State and the individual could be established, it would be found utterly impossible to satisfy in practice. It is altogether impossible to measure the relative value of services and benefits except by the standard of the competitive market, and that, as already pointed out, is not governed by any ethical consideration. This difficulty seems to me to be very imperfectly realised by the advocates of socialism. They contemplate abolishing competition and with it, of course, the value in exchange which is determined by competition. But at the same time they desire to reward every one according to the services he renders. This is to attempt what is impossible. Competition out of the way, the present standard of value would no longer exist. In a socialistic state recourse would be had to some other means of determining what was to be paid to each man. But to estimate the true worth of services is altogether beyond human capacity; and it can hardly be doubted that, though the remuneration might nominally be given for services, it would in fact be yielded to personal influence and political pressure. It is, then, neither just nor practical to try and establish between the State and the individual a balanced account of benefits and services mutually rendered; and it is important that Conservatives, in supporting

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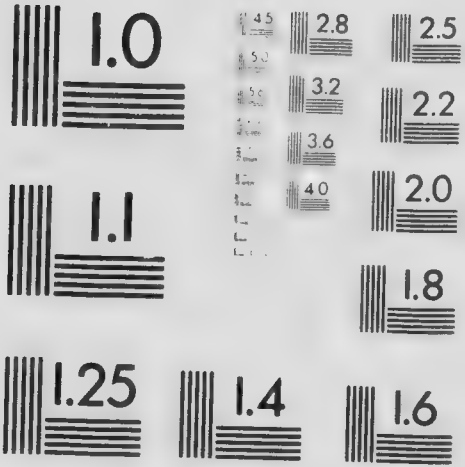

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wise and humane measures for the relief of suffering, should not be deluded into accepting the unsound though plausible and attractive argument of a claim in justice, which by fallacious reasoning may be made to support mischievous errors.

It is not out of place to point out that as it is not required by justice, so it is not expedient to aim at a great reconstruction of society by which the wealth of individuals should be more nearly equalised, or rather only one side of that readjustment of wealth can be approved as advantageous to the community. Making poor people richer is doubtless expedient ; but the opinion strangely prevails that it is also expedient to make very rich people poorer. Now I am persuaded that this way of thinking is mistaken. It is assuredly very desirable that poor people should be made richer ; that destitution should be rendered impossible; and that in every household there should be not only enough to live upon, but enough to secure comforts in time of ill-health, reasonable holidays, and interests in life other than those of mere toil. But, while every one must desire with King Henry IV of France, that every peasant should have his fowl in the pot, and that with the passage of time poverty should steadily grow less intense and more rare, it does not appear to me to be

equally true that the very rich ought at the same time to be gradually eliminated from society. On the contrary it appears to be more in the interest of the community that there should be very rich people than that there should be moderately rich people. The conception that a man with £5,000 a year is a much better citizen than the man with £100,000 a year is quite unjustified by experience. In point of luxury of life there is little to choose between the two. Both live luxuriously according to the standard of life that prevails for the great majority of the population. But the very rich man is much more often conscious that he ought to use his wealth not only for himself but for others than is the less rich man. His richness impresses his own imagination. The opportunity it gives him of doing service to others stirs a natural ambition and a pardonable vanity. Public opinion stimulates him to munificence by praise and by rebuke. He cannot live wholly selfishly without being pointed at on all sides. If he pours out his wealth on some religious or charitable object, he has the gratification of seeing the magnitude of his own power and the abundance of its speedy achievement. Even apart from the highest motives he has everything to urge him to unselfish expenditure ; everything to make him follow munificence as a career in life.

But the man with £5,000 a year has little but virtue to make him charitable or public-spirited in his expenditure. If he chooses to spend his income altogether on his own pleasures, except in a very narrow circle his epicureanism is unknown and unnoticed. If, on the other hand, he aims at munificence, it must be on a comparatively small and uninteresting scale. His gifts produce little result and excite little interest. Whatever he does in that sort may bring him ease of conscience and perhaps the mild approbation of a few friends, but no paragraph in the newspapers, no niche in the temple of fame. From the point of view of the community, it cannot be doubted that much more is obtained from the millionaire than from the more modestly wealthy classes. And in fact the sentiment in favour of the munificent spending of private wealth, which is stronger in our country, I believe, than in any other European State, may probably be traced to the example of large landowners of high rank. It originated with them, and it has spread from them to the moneyed class, now often much richer, and downwards through all those whose wealth makes them in any sense the centre of a social circle. But if the aim of some social reformers were gratified and no one had more than £5,000 a year, it is probable that this tradition would die away. There would

be still a luxurious class; probably a much more numerous luxurious class than now. But that luxurious class would no longer be munificent, and, except upon the highest motives and among that minority of the human race who are sincerely religious, it would not be a charitable class. The conception that riches are a stewardship to be used for others would become a counsel of perfection known only to devout Christians. The great mass of well-to-do people would spend their money frankly on themselves.

For the State to intervene directly to regulate the amount of wealth which an individual may be permitted to acquire seems to involve injustice and to be in itself unwise; but the State has interfered, and is often urged to interfere further, in the mechanism of trade and industry, not with a view of controlling the acquisitions of individuals, but in the general interest of the whole community. With this purpose elaborate laws have been passed to avoid accidents in mining and other dangerous occupations, to regulate factories and workshops in the interest of the public health, to limit or altogether to prohibit the employment of children and, less rigorously, of women. Quite recently measures have been taken to protect miners, although adult men, from what are thought to be excessive hours of labour, and to require, in respect to certain

sweated trades, that the wages paid should be subject to the control of a wages board. Broadly speaking, these interventions of the State are defended on two principles. First, that the result that they have achieved is a desirable one ; and secondly, that owing to the circumstances of the particular case they cannot be attained by the voluntary action of the persons directly concerned. These reasons seem sound. But there is an ambiguity in them which conceals a latent danger. What is meant by a desirable object ? A law may be thought desirable by a government which is, in fact, not thought desirable by the workmen whose industry it regulates. Or it may be thought desirable by some of the workmen concerned, but not by all. This is actually what has happened in connection with the Eight Hours Bill. And it evidently raises a new point if it be maintained that the State must regulate an industry in a way thought desirable by some but not by all of those who are concerned in the industry. It is plain that legislation might become very oppressive if the State is to intervene not only to protect persons who cannot protect themselves, which is the case with women and children, and may be the case in some employments with men also, but to enforce upon adult human beings perfectly able to judge of their own interests, a particular way of

following their occupation. A second danger is that, while it is sometimes true that poor men cannot protect themselves in making bargains with rich men, it must not be assumed without careful reflection that no voluntary way of protecting themselves exists, and that they are obliged to have recourse to the power of the State. It may often happen that by combination or otherwise workmen may find their own way out of an inequality in bargaining, and may be able to do without the help of the State. It is far better if such a way can be found, because the State in the end depends on the vigour of the character of the individuals which make it up; and that character is strengthened by the effort to find a way out of difficulties and hardships, and is weakened by the habit of looking to State help. Probably if the ideas that are now dominant had equally prevailed sixty years ago, the State would have done for workmen what trade unions and collective bargaining have done. The difference would certainly not have been to the advantage of the workmen. A trade union is in the workmen's own control and is a flexible organisation which can be adapted from time to time as need requires. The State is controlled by a complexity of forces certainly not identical with the desires of a workman in a particular trade. And the State is a clumsy,

rigid instrument difficult to handle and operating heavily and unexpectedly. It might easily have happened that workmen would have found themselves in a position unpleasantly approximating to State slavery, governed at every turn by bureaucratic regulations and, worst of all, enervated by having all the conditions of their industry ordered for them and nothing left to their own initiative and resolution.

Few people will doubt that the voluntary action of trade unions has served the working-class better than any exertion of the powers of the State could have done. Trade unions have acted with an ease and adaptability which the State cannot imitate, and have at the same time given training to their members of high value in self-control, in patience, in resolution, and in capacity for leadership. But we must realise that what is done by voluntary action is done with friction, and good results are only achieved after periods, sometimes prolonged periods, of stress and conflict. It seemed to our fathers and grandfathers that trade unions were troublers of the peace, and it was no doubt the fact that they often made serious mistakes and took up an unreasonable, vexatious or obstinate attitude. These are the incidents of working by the voluntary action of individuals. By employing the mechanism of the State

you obtain at once a moderate degree of wisdom and efficiency and the smoothness that results from the exertion of overwhelming power. But the rigid woodenness which is inseparable from the action of a great State makes such action operative and successful only where it has been directed with a clear and skilful purpose. A law cannot be moulded to circumstances ; it cannot be adapted to the unforeseen. If, therefore, the plan has in any respect been misconceived, State action comes to a stop, and we find social reformers sadly admitting that such and such an Act of Parliament, though well intended, has proved a dead letter. The explanation of this futility is often that some element in the problem was not foreseen ; that the letter of the law, once passed, cannot be bent aside, and that therefore its authority, unsuited to the facts of the case and incapable of adaptation, becomes powerless and useless. But it is a still graver objection to State action that it has none of the educative side of a voluntary effort. Workmen combining together in a trade union to get better wages or shorter hours obtain not only the wages or the hours for which they strive, but a most valuable social and political education by the way. They have to learn to work with one another ; they have to learn to respect public opinion ; they have to learn to be reasonably regardful of

the interests of other persons. The very fact that trade unions have often done unwise things is the best testimony to their real value ; for it is only by doing unwise things, or at least having the opportunity to do them, that human beings can ever effectually learn wisdom.

But I do wrong in enlarging on this topic, for, as long as State action does not involve what is unjust or oppressive, it cannot be said that the principles of Conservatism are hostile to it. This has been brought out in recent years by the acceptance by the Conservative Party of a programme of State interference in foreign and colonial trade which we know as "Tariff Reform." This is a policy which seeks to regulate the import trade of the country in such a way as to achieve three objects: First, to advantage the King's dominions beyond the seas by diverting part of the foreign trade of the country to them; secondly, to distinguish between those countries which treat, or are willing to treat, us well in tariff arrangements from those who are not willing, by giving a corresponding advantage in the terms on which foreign traders are admitted to our market; thirdly, so to limit foreign competition as to prevent sudden and distracting variations in the conditions of production in this country and to preserve stability in the home market.

This scheme of regulation, being operated by import duties, incidentally is designed to achieve also a fourth object, that of providing revenue to the Exchequer. It would be going beyond the scope of this book to discuss the economic theories which are involved in this policy. It will be sufficient to point out its relation to the normal tenets of Conservatism. Tariff Reform is primarily an expression of the imperialist side of Conservatism. It attracts Conservatives because it holds out hopes of gratifying the wishes of our fellow subjects in the Dominions and of drawing them closer, both by patriotic sympathy and by the prospect of trade advantage, to the Mother Country, and of repaying the injuries inflicted on English commerce by foreign protectionist tariffs. Secondly, it appeals to the Tory element in Conservatism as being an attempt to regulate by the hand of authority the uncertainties of trade, and to substitute stability and order in the region of commerce for the apparently unsatisfactory effects of unbridled competition. To the purely conservative element in modern Conservatism it does not appeal, because the conservative, looking back to the years of success and prosperity that have followed the adoption of Free Trade, is indisposed to make a change. Nor is it difficult for him to see that Tariff Reform might easily lead to a more decidedly

protectionist system, and that anything like high protection in this country would smooth the way for Socialism. For under a protectionist system the growth of trade combinations and trusts would be greatly stimulated, as in America and Germany; and it would be very difficult to argue that it was more dangerous and mischievous to place all the means of production in the hands of the State itself than to have them monopolised by a number of private combinations. It is certainly true that the practical alternative before us is competition (at any rate among our own countrymen) or the control of the State, and that any effort to limit competition in the interests of any group of private persons, or anything less than the State, would be speedily judged to be intolerable. To this Tariff Reformers would no doubt answer that they did not dream of any protection high enough to produce such mischief. But the difficulty in their path is that if the tariff be high enough effectually to restrict foreign competition, combinations of home traders behind the tariff will certainly arise; and that if the tariff be not high enough, the supposed stability in the home market will not be attained. In short, it is not easy to have the good of competition without the evil. If in the interests of stability you shut out foreign competition, the home trader will

be apt to make the market more stable still by a combination; and finally the socialist will argue not ineffectively, that if stability be your object, State production and no competition is the most stable system of all.

But whether we think this particular instance of State interference wise or foolish, it is for our present purpose more important to emphasise that a policy of State interference is not, as such, alien from Conservatism. The questions that arise as to the respective spheres of the State and the individual cannot, in short, be answered by Conservatives with any general answer. The only proposition of a general character that can be laid down is that the State must not treat individuals unjustly, that is, must not inflict upon them undeserved injury. This condition granted, any scheme for enlarging the function of the State must be judged by Conservatives merely on its merits without reference to any general formula, but from a standpoint prudently distrustful of the untried, and preferring to develop what exists rather than to demolish and reconstruct. Conservative social reform need not, therefore, proceed on purely individualist lines. There is no antithesis between Conservatism and Socialism, or even between Conservatism and Liberalism. Subject to the counsels of prudence and to a preference for what exists and

has been tried over the unknown, Conservatives have no difficulty in welcoming the social activity of the State. The point which principally distinguishes their attitude from that of other political parties is a rigorous adherence to justice. This involves resistance to any measure which would impoverish classes or individuals by depriving them of all or even of a considerable fraction of what they possess. It is so plain that to take what one man has and give it to another is unjust, even though the first man be rich and the second man poor, that it is surprising that legislative measures which consist essentially in such transfers should ever be advocated or defended. This advocacy is no doubt due to a conviction now fairly widespread that poverty cannot be remedied except by depriving rich people of at least large portions of their property. The expediency of such measures being thus rightly or wrongly assumed, the argument from justice is met by maintaining that individuals have as good a right to look to the State for assistance against hardship as they have to be left unmolested in the enjoyment of what they may possess. This is a dangerous error. It is not true that a poor man has the same claim to be relieved by the State from ill fortune as the rich man has to be left by the State in undisturbed enjoyment of good

fortune. Even if it were true that poverty be the effect of injustice, it would not be right to relieve it by confiscating property; for no proposition in morals is clearer than that you are not entitled to commit one injustice for the sake of remedying another. In fact the theory that it is just to relieve poverty by transferring to the poor the property of the rich rests on one of two fallacies. Either it depends on the doctrine of reciprocity of obligation between the State and the individual, which has already been fully examined, or it ignores the difference between the obligation not to inflict injury and the obligation to relieve suffering. The first of these obligations is always the more imperative of the two: no one may rob to give alms; a shipwrecked crew may not even in the extremity of starvation kill and eat one of their number. To carry out, then, the enrichment of the poor by the impoverishment of the rich, even if it were practically an efficient policy, would not be just. But, in fact, such a measure would be as unworkable as it would be immoral. The apprehension of confiscation would oblige people to export or to conceal their wealth, and the uncertainty whether the accumulations of wealth in the future would be respected, would be fatal to the enterprise and confidence that enable commerce and industry to prosper.

Conservatives thus support measures of social reform as cordially as any political school, but more scrupulously than some. The object of such reforming legislation is, of course, not in any sense a matter of controversy between the Conservative and other parties. All are agreed in the desire to mitigate suffering. To the Conservative this purpose comes with a sacred sanction, for the religious foundation of his Tory beliefs gives to the sorrows of the poor an urgent claim upon his care. But the same religious convictions which inculcate sympathy for suffering teach also the supreme authority of justice; and it is in insisting that injustice shall not stain national help to the afflicted that Conservatism finds in respect to social reform its peculiar and distinctive task.

CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL AFFAIRS

THE attitude of Conservatism towards the foreign and imperial affairs of the country has special importance. Indeed it may be said that many men are brought to support the Conservative rather than any other political party, because they believe that its principles on foreign and colonial matters are wise and patriotic. Nay, those principles have done more than secure widespread support to the Conservative Party. Conservative policy in foreign and imperial affairs has been largely adopted by the leaders of the Liberal Party, and except in so far as fiscal controversies are concerned, the external affairs of the nation are no longer topics of distinctly partisan dispute. But the tradition of past cleavage of opinion between Liberalism and Conservatism in these matters still remains: it is operative in the minds of a large section of the Liberal Party, who dissent from their own leaders, and it furnishes an effective ground to Conservatism for claiming the support of the electorate.

In discussions relating to foreign policy an unusually direct appeal is made to the Christian moral law. It is urged by Liberals that in foreign affairs there prevails an immoral doctrine, disregardful of the rights of other nations and inconsistent with honest dealing and with a Christian horror of bloodshed. "Reason of State," it is argued, is allowed to supersede the normal morality of Christians, and a Jesuitical practice prevails of justifying wicked means by patriotic ends.

It is doubtless true that in foreign relations kings and statesmen, for national objects, have often infringed the moral law. Frederick the Great, Catherine II, Napoleon, Cavour, and Bismarck (to name no others), all did things to advance the interests of their country, which in private relations would have been thought infamous. With the possible exception of Bismarck, they were none of them personally good, and it is not surprising that patriotic motives made them unscrupulous. It is indeed much easier for human nature to do wrong for an altruistic purpose than for an object which is nakedly selfish. Whatever conscience remains protests against the crime that is committed for personal advantage or personal revenge. But when a man is acting in the interests of others, for his country, or under the influence of any such elevating and inspiring sentiment, con-

science is drugged at the outset and allows to pass unchallenged much that on enquiry its tribunal would condemn. This happens not only in high politics, but in all sorts of relations of life. The French have a saying that good fathers of families are capable of anything; and it is true that family affection will play just the same part as reasons of State in smoothing the path of deceit or injustice and silencing the scruples of conscience. But all this is only to say that those who are charged with the external relations of a great country, like those in other walks of life, have special temptations peculiar to their vocation, and that these special temptations triumph over those who are by moral habit persons of slight virtue. Similarly, speakers in Parliament and on the platform tend to become unscrupulous in matter of truthfulness; those who administer the criminal law, like judges and gaolers, must be on their guard against cruelty; players on the stage are notoriously liable to temptations of sexual immorality; financiers find it hard to walk in the strict paths of honesty:—there is nothing, therefore, exceptional or peculiarly terrifying in the moral dangers that surround the administration of foreign policy. It is a common case—the case of what is in itself innocent and even good, growing out of proportion and so overthrowing the righteous balance of moral action.

Nevertheless, it remains true that "reason of State" has often been allowed to become the parent of grave national wrongdoing; and it is not surprising that, in reaction from this evil, some good men seem inclined to maintain that the action of a state towards other states ought to be the same as the action of an individual towards other individuals. But this contains a fallacy which one might think it should not be difficult to discern. We personify a state, but a state is not a person. It contains a vast number of persons, and those who speak in its name and determine its policy act, not for themselves, but for others. It follows that all that department of morality which requires an individual to sacrifice himself to others, everything which falls under the heading of unselfishness, is inappropriate to the action of a state. No one has a right to be unselfish with other people's interests. It is the business of every ruler to exact to the utmost every claim which can both justly and wisely be made on behalf of his country. He is in the position of a trustee of the interests of others and must be just and not generous.

But there is a further distinction between the acts of the State and those of the individual which must be borne in mind. States can appeal but very little to principles of law, and even less to the arbitrament of any fair

authority. It is true that there exists a body of principles, and to a more limited extent of actual rules, which pass by the name of international law. But these principles and rules do not cover all nor even most of the disputes that arise between nations. In every dispute much turns on the particular circumstances and on the question how far admitted principles or rules apply to them. Even with the immensely more elaborate structure of our ordinary municipal law this of course constantly happens, and the machinery of the Courts of Justice is daily at work deciding how the law applies to particular circumstances. But the corresponding machinery of international arbitration, though much improved of recent years and now of real usefulness, still fails to deal with many disputes, including those that are most dangerous to peace. The reasons for the comparative inefficacy of arbitration between nations, in comparison to the effective authority of the jurisdiction of law courts between individuals, are perhaps three. First, the court of arbitration has no power to enforce its decrees. When a law court pronounces judgment it has all the authority of the State behind it to carry out that judgment. Police and, if necessary, soldiers, can be used to make the judgment effectual. But the court of arbitration has

no such force at its command. It must make appeal to the sense of right of the disputing nations and their rulers. And this appeal is effective in inverse proportion to the importance of the issue in dispute. Secondly, there is even now a lack of confidence in the perfect fairness of arbitration. The arbitration court must be manned by human beings, and patriotic prejudices and international jealousies are so prevalent and so strong that doubts arise whether the judges are free from their influence. These doubts have been diminished by adopting in recent arbitrations the plan of having professional judges or other great jurists to sit as arbitrators. But even now there is no general feeling of confidence that an arbitration between nations will be fair. Behind these two obvious causes for the limitation of arbitral proceedings between nations, there is one more recondite but perhaps still more important. And this relates directly to the distinction between the moral obligations of a state and of an individual.

This cause is a sense of the inapplicability of the idea of law to the most important national quarrels. Even between individuals law fails to cover the whole ground of possible controversies. People frequently quarrel and live for years on terms of animosity without being able to bring their disagreement

before a court of law. All that the law does in such cases is to restrict them to peaceable methods of carrying on the dispute. And though, if the dispute purely concerns the interests of the contending parties, Christianity would instruct them rather to suffer wrong than maintain a quarrel, this is not its teaching where the interests of others are concerned. Where bodies of men are involved, controversies may and do arise about which it is difficult to deny that both parties may fairly think themselves in the right. It is so in disputes between capital and labour, and it is so in those disputes because there is really no standard to appeal to. The dispute is not about what is just, but between the conflicting interests of two parties bargaining with one another as to which is to gain at the other's expense. Much is indeed often said of a " fair wage " and a " fair price," but these expressions will not stand analysis. And this which is true of some disputes between individuals, is much more often true of the disputes between states. There is in reality no basis for an appeal to justice. It cannot be said that either is injuring the other. Both want the same thing, or their respective wants are inconsistent, and it cannot reasonably be said that either is in the right or in the wrong. Arguments may be and generally are used on both sides, but a candid onlooker will often

conclude that those arguments are not so unequally balanced as to prevent any reasonable man holding the opinion to which his point of view inclines him. The truth is there are no clear rights in the matter: it is a conflict of interests, and such conflicts cannot be determined by law. For law supposes common ground between contending parties; but in a conflict of interests there is no common ground.

An illustration will perhaps make this clear. Suppose a war took place between a European country and one of the South American Republics. And suppose that at the conclusion of the war the European country was victorious and, having occupied the territory of the Republic, proposed to annex the whole or a large part of it. The United States of America would certainly resist this proposed annexation in conformity with what is called the "Monroe doctrine," which lays it down that no territory in the American continent ought in the future to be acquired by a European Power. From the point of view of law, there is nothing to be said for the Monroe doctrine. It is no more respectable than the law of the King of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* that every one more than a mile high should leave the Court. What it really is, is a definition of the supreme importance of the interest of the United States in all parts of the American continent.

The people and government of the United States are convinced that it would be very injurious to them if any European Power acquired fresh territory across the Atlantic. But they do not and cannot make appeal to any principle which is common to them and any European State. They assert their interests and are prepared to fight for them, and that is all. On the other hand, in the supposed case the European Power might reasonably say that its interests required adequate compensation for the war that had been waged, and that, according to the immemorial custom of nations, an annexation of territory was a proper form for that compensation to take. This cannot be denied, but it amounts only to saying that nations have been accustomed to do what their interest seemed to them to require. The United States would certainly refuse to admit that the custom of annexing territory could be allowed to apply where it was injurious to the interests of the United States. Here, then, would be a conflict, and a conflict not turning on any question as to what the Law of Nations was, or even how the Law of Nations applied to a particular set of circumstances, but a conflict between irreconcilable national interests, one nation affirming that its interests required an annexation, and the other nation affirming that its interests would not allow that annexation to

be made. This is a simple case; but in respect to the majority of wars it will be found that the cause of war is on analysis an irreconcilable conflict of interests, and therefore not a thing that can be determined by any law, or by the arbitrament of any court.

It may be asked whether this appeal to interest is, after all, consistent with Christian morality: whether, for example, the "Monroe doctrine" is one which a Christian nation ought to affirm, or whether it is not a "reason of State" just of the kind that honest Liberals denounce. The answer is that in international matters we find ourselves in the logical difficulty which is sometimes called a "vicious circle." Every one is entitled to defend himself, and all bodies of persons are not merely entitled, but bound to, defend their common existence. But if nations must defend their existence, they must resist whatever threatens that existence. Any interests, therefore, which are of the highest importance to their existence they must defend. This is so, even if the threatened loss or injury would not immediately destroy the national existence, for it might be such that it was easy to foresee further loss or injury arising out of it, and only to be avoided, if at all, by a war. Clearly a nation must look ahead. It is neither wise nor virtuous to suffer considerable losses and then ultimately to be driven to fight for the

national existence. By these considerations nations are led to classify together their vital or essential interests, meaning those which either immediately or proximately concern the national existence. In like manner they defend what is called the national honour, meaning immunity from such insults as indicate on the part of other nations a total disregard for the injured one's national pride. Such insults if inflicted can hardly fail to be the immediate precursors of attacks upon interests, which would go on until the national existence was overthrown. And if it be asked why individuals, or bodies of individuals, in organised States do not similarly feel bound to contend to defend themselves against insults and injuries on the ground that these, unresisted, would soon rise to a point threatening their very lives, the answer is that they did do so until the State and the law became sufficiently powerful and sufficiently skilful to protect them. Even now in all countries save our own the authority of the law does not extend sufficiently to satisfy those who desire protection against insult, and accordingly they have recourse to fighting duels. The way, then, to avoid conflicts of interests between nations would be by the reign of law and the jurisdiction of judges. Yet it is precisely because the conflicts of interests are not reducible to terms of law that arbitration

is mainly limited. Here is an apparent logical circle; and there can be no way out unless international law can make a common ground for deciding conflicts of interests by defining how far and subject to what conditions a nation has a right to exist, and what may properly be regarded as essential to national existence These are the questions that must be solved before arbitration can supersede war.

It is unlikely that law and arbitration will ever be able to overcome this difficulty; and even to lay down any rule of national conduct is not easy. The most hopeful path to follow is to try and determine what is really meant by national existence. For national existence is plainly not so simple and unmistakable a thing as individual life. Losses to a nation may be so great that they change the character of the nation itself. It would be so with us if we lost all our dominions beyond the sea. Here we shall find help in the conception of vocation which is familiar to the religious mind. We must say that national existence means the capacity to fulfil the national vocation. This brings us into touch with the Christian moral system. For Conservatism must not shrink from the appeal to Christian morality. Its characteristic as a party ought to be, in view as well of its past as of its future, the readiness to apply a religious standard to politics. In foreign affairs, as at home, this

should be its principle; and in maintaining the national greatness it must take care to prove at every step the righteousness of the means used for that end. National greatness is in itself an object strictly consistent with Christian teaching. It is the duty of a nation, even more clearly than of an individual, to use its talents and powers to the utmost. To shrink from great responsibilities, to hesitate to incur great sacrifices for national objects, is in truth to wrap our talent in a napkin out of cowardly scruple. It is to fail to respond to vocation. It is right for a nation to be great and to wish to be great, to resist diminution of its power, and to organise that power so as to make it as effectual for good as it can be made. Its power is the talent committed to it; its dominion is a divine vicegerency; to the extent of that dominion it must labour for the good of men, establishing order, keeping peace, doing justice, enlightening ignorance, making smooth the path of religion, to the end that the earth may be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

But what are the moral limits to national greatness? The function of an enlightened foreign policy is to uphold national greatness with due regard to the place of other nations in the world. A nation begins to be indefensibly aggressive so soon as it forces others

either to yield what is essential to their place in the world or to have recourse to war. The moment foreign policy begins to imply the lessening of another nation, it begins to tread a questionable path. It is true that there are certain unusual cases where it may be said that two nations cannot exist side by side, without the lessening or even the total destruction of one or the other. Such a case was thought to arise in South Africa in 1899. But normally, and as between the greater nations, it may be said that a policy that aims not at making one's own country great, but at making another country small, transgresses the moral principles that ought to lie at the root of foreign policy. Each country must follow its vocation, but must also respect the vocation of others. Each country has its part to play, and to try to force it to abandon or contract that part is to put upon its people the choice between fighting and failing to respond to its vocation. International law is useless here. It makes no attempt to decide what is essential to national life, and indeed this is a question which no law can answer. The problem must be solved by reference to the idea of vocation, of a sphere which a nation rightly fills, and for the sake of which it is justified in making war. Certainly this conception is a vague one and difficult to apply as a practical test in foreign affairs. But it is

better to have even a vague rule than the unformulated dictates of the consciences of angry patriots illogically crying out for justice, when in fact only national interests are at stake. The idea of fulfilling a vocation forms a rational basis for the language that wise men use in maintaining a national contention outside international law, and will preserve us from the alternative errors of unworthy surrender and piratical aggression. Law and arbitration may carry us through minor difficulties and determine many vexatious questions of subordinate importance; but the conduct of a great nation in those controversies which are outside the classifications of law because they are conflicts of interests, can only be made subject to the authority of conscience and susceptible of an ethical decision by asking what is necessary to the national vocation. The asking of this question will give us a due sense of proportion in respect to all diplomatic disputes, and will make wars rare without suffering peace to become ignoble.

The other great branch of external affairs raises no such difficult moral problem. As in our relation with foreign countries so also in respect to the dominions and dependencies of the Crown beyond the seas, the purpose of national policy must be the fulfilment of the national vocation. Happily while in foreign affairs the following of vocation may mean

war, within the Empire no such awful contingency exists. But within the Empire a certain incoherence seems to become manifest in the presence of the conception of national vocation. Vocation implies a person called. It suggests a being, organic and homogeneous, setting about his proper function with entire mastery of all his powers. The British Empire at present is not like such a being. Part of it is indeed active, but part of it is rather a sphere of operation than itself operative. And, what is strangest, part of it can be called neither active nor passive; it neither does nor is done to; is neither a force nor a burden but lies betwixt the two, neither helping nor being helped. That the Empire should contain both what is active and what is passive is characteristic of it. Our vocation in the world has been to undertake the government of vast uncivilised populations and to raise them gradually to a higher level of life. Those populations form part of the Empire, but naturally can scarcely be reckoned as adding to its strength, at any rate in the earlier stages of development under our rule. After a time, as in India, they pass from being a sphere of national work to being part of the national strength; and if there are deductions to be made, those may fairly be reckoned as signs of the imperfection that attaches to all human effort. In what we call the Dependencies of

the Crown, therefore, there is nothing abnormal, nothing inconsistent with the obvious characteristics of our vocation. But the great self-governing Dominions play at present a strangely ambiguous part, for they are, like the United Kingdom, inhabited by a population of our race, who are governed according to our standards of civilisation and live essentially lives like ours; but yet the Dominions are not so organised as to be a regular part of our national force. They do indeed come to our help, as in South Africa, but such action is avowedly the action of independent allies rather than the co-operation of different parts of a single body. They lie outside the idea of a person called to a high function. Though reckoned, and proud to be reckoned, as of the same people as ourselves, they are too detached to be thought of, even in a metaphor, as part of the same organism. And if we personify the Empire, our imaginations recoil like Frankenstein from the monster that we have made, the monster of a heterogeneous personality.

This brings us to the greatest problem of imperial affairs, the problem of how to make the Empire a single organism without destroying or imperilling the full liberty which each part of it rightly and uncompromisingly claims. We want the people of the Dominions to be in the fullest sense part of the national power.

We want them to hearken with a single ear to the dictates of the national vocation. We want the whole body to go forth on its appointed task with a single mind and will. But we want also that all citizens of our race, in whatever part of the King's Dominions they may live, shall be equally sharers in the great inheritance of free self-government. To the solution of this problem Conservatism is already addressing itself. Nor is there any partisan dispute about the ultimate purpose in view. The policy of preferential trade has been propounded as a step in the desired direction; and if this policy has been resisted by Liberals and a few Conservatives, it is not because its unifying object is not desired, but because there are doubts as to the reality of its unifying effect. It is disputed whether giving British subjects in different parts of the Empire trade advantages at the cost of other British subjects in the imperial markets, will really make for unifying and organising the whole body. But the policy of drawing the Empire together is and will remain a chief object of Conservatism to-day; and if it should turn out that preference is an impossible or inefficacious method of achieving the object, it will only serve to turn the minds of Conservatives to new expedients for attaining what they desire.

It is important to remember that a main

purpose of uniting the Empire is to organise it for war and what belongs to war, for the foreign policy that leads up to war and for the armaments and other means of defence that are necessary for carrying war on. It is in respect to our relations to foreign countries and to our dependencies that we feel principally the lack of imperial union and the consequent difficulty of fulfilling our national vocation as a single people. Organised unitedly for war, we should have the machinery which would be also available for carrying out any imperial policy within the dependencies of the Empire. We should, in short, act as a unit in so far as our vocation required. But that further and closer union for all purposes which we enjoy in the United Kingdom and which depends not a little on geographical propinquity is, however theoretically desirable, probably unattainable for the whole of an Empire so scattered as ours. We do not desire to press the cause of union in a way inconsistent with the facts of distance, and consequently with well-informed and skilful government. We do not, in short, wish to interfere with any powers the colonial Dominions now possess. But we wish to bring them into activity as part of the operative power of the Empire as a whole, in order that a single national unit may fulfil to the world its appointed vocation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUTION

THE constitution of our country is famous to a degree which makes discourse upon its merits hackneyed. But something must be said about it in relation to our present subject because it is the centre of more controversies than one, which occupy the stage of modern politics and engage the attention of Conservatives. The Constitution is the greatest contribution that the English people have made to human progress and it bears deeply imprinted upon it their peculiar characteristics. With various degrees of faithfulness it has been copied in every civilised country in the world. Nowhere where civilisation exists is there a land which does not bear traces of its influence. Yet there is nothing cosmopolitan about it. Many countries had estates of the realm; but the way our Parliament developed is peculiar to the English alone. Stamped with our national character and remote from theoretical perfection, had it not been a universal example, it might have been said to be a local aberration. So little has it the symmetry

and intelligent construction which one would expect in a model, that its most interesting and perhaps its most important feature is its elastic adaptability. It would be difficult to name any other human institution which has retained so much external continuity with so much essential change. The main outlines of its structure are what they were made by King Edward I more than six hundred years ago in a state of society almost infinitely different. To-day the Royal Commissioners give assent to the National Insurance Bill by the words "Le Roi le veult," and to the Budget of 1909 by the words "Le Roy remercie ses bons sujets, accepte leur benevolence et ainsi le veult," because when Parliament began it was in French that the King naturally spoke. And yet this external sameness is only the exterior of a political reality, as different from the constitution of the Plantagenets as two systems of government can easily be. Nor has this variation been by any means a steady and simple movement in one direction. The limited monarchy of the Plantagenets gave place to the much more despotic system of Edward IV and Henry VIII. That despotic monarchy in its turn changed to a limited monarchy of a new type, where a foreign king and a powerful aristocracy shared authority; and that again gave way to the modern system of a democratic Parliament

largely under oligarchic influence. And this mixture of democracy and oligarchy has changed and is even now changing its character, and developing we scarcely know in what manner and to what end. This adaptability is largely due to the singular power English people have of make-believe. Institutions set up on one ground have been maintained on another and justified perhaps upon a third ; developments unconscious, almost accidental, have afterwards been treated as masterpieces of human wisdom and defended as founded upon principles which, it may be, none of those who carried them through had ever thought of. If any one will read a Constitutional History of England, he will find assumed a sort of constitutional Providence watching over the English people and gifted with a foreknowledge of the perfections which were to be attained in the precise year in which the History was published; guiding Plantagenets and Yorkists, Tudor Parliaments and Puritan rebels, Jacobites and Whigs, sovereigns who could speak nothing but German and sovereigns who gloried in the name of Briton, to the appointed end;—a Providence who secured that Sir Robert Walpole should be fond of power, that George I should not speak English, that William IV should quarrel with the Tories, that Queen Victoria should be a woman, all in order that

things should be precisely what they are. Now all this is really only an effort to explain the constitution as coherent, and therefore to suppose behind it some sort of designing tendency, whereas in fact the true explanation is that the English have a singular power of working institutions of whatever character to suit the political ideas of the time. Very few constitutional developments of importance have been consciously undertaken and deliberately planned. Statesmen and all that complexity of expression which we call public opinion, have worked the political machine as they thought best, pretending, probably quite sincerely, that theirs was the way in which it always had been worked; and then when lapse of time had consecrated their practices into usages, others analysed them into principles and founded on those principles new practices, in like manner to become customary in their turn. The advantages of this national aptitude are doubtless great. The continuity which Burke valued so highly is not broken. Violent changes are made difficult and rare. Men have time to get used to each stage in the movement without their natural conservative instincts suffering a shock. In this respect constitutional development may be said to have been usually made under typical conservative conditions. Even where there has been something of a dislo-

cation, as in the case of the Revolution of 1688, the Reform Act of 1832 and the Parliament Act of 1911, an effort has been made to justify the change by strictly conservative arguments and to represent revolution as being in some sense a reversion to ancient principles. But there are corresponding dangers. After all, revolution is revolution, and to clothe it in conservative garments is only to put on it a disguise. Even change is change whatever it may be called. It may perhaps be doubted whether what is essentially a pretence can really be for the best. In the region of morals we are familiar with similar cases of make-believe, and there it is well known not to be easy to determine where decency and propriety of feeling end and sheer hypocrisy begins. As long as the pretence makes for mitigating evil and keeping people in touch with virtue, even when they are temporarily out of its paths, the result is good. But there may also come a time when by pretence men may bring themselves to do what with their eyes open they would shrink from in horror. And so with political changes. As long as the claim to follow precedent and the appearance of conservatism really make for stability and moderation, it is well. But it may also happen that things may be done which, if they could be seen in their unveiled reality, would be instantly

rejected, and then the conservative externals become only a trap, a rotten parapet. Conservatives must take care that they are not cheated by appearances into consenting to changes and developments which may sap and undermine much that is both ancient and valuable.

Let us proceed briefly to review some aspects of the Constitution as it is, noting what is specially interesting from the point of view of Conservatism.

The centre of the Constitution is the Monarchy. Probably every one would agree in naming the Monarchy as an institution which it was desirable to preserve, and the preservation of which was an illustration of the usefulness of conservative sentiment. Unquestionably the Monarchy still excites strong enthusiasm among Conservatives, and indeed among all sections of the population, on the conservative side of their minds. The Tory devotion to the old kingship is not yet extinct, and is strengthened and sustained, even in the changed atmosphere of our time, by the faculty that men have of concentrating the emotions upon a person and embodying in the King the greatness and power of the country, its long and splendid history, and the tremendous future, whether good or bad, which must await it. Imperialists, moreover, look to the Monarchy as to the only part of our Consti-

tution that extends over the whole Empire, and value it as the only positive link, apart from sentiment, which holds the whole together. In Canada and Australia, in New Zealand and South Africa, amidst the countless multitudes of India and throughout the dependent provinces and islands scattered over the globe, one British name is everywhere revered, one person receives the common homage of the entire vast dominion. The King and the Monarchy, therefore, stand high in respect, in esteem and in loyalty—higher than they stood in the long interval that divides the death of Charles II (if not of Elizabeth) from the accession of Victoria.

But it is interesting and perhaps a little disquieting to notice that when we pass from recognising the warmth of sentiment that surrounds the Throne to enquire what precisely is the constitutional function of the Monarchy, and what it is exactly that the King does, we find that even the best-informed persons appear to have no very definite answer to give us. The Monarchy is certainly a great symbol, but is it a great force? Undoubtedly since Queen Victoria first ascended the Throne there has been a tendency, deliberately adopted and even avowed, to withdraw the person of the sovereign from all criticism, and therefore from all controversy. This has no doubt greatly strengthened the Monarchy in

its part as a passive symbol, but it may reasonably be doubted whether it has strengthened it as an operative force in the Constitution. For a person can only be withdrawn from criticism and controversy by doing nothing save what is universally approved. But to do what is universally approved is to do little more than what is mechanical. It is not very difficult to ascertain with the help of able advisers, what acts will fall within the category of general approbation; and that comprises almost all that a modern King of our country has publicly to do. In the sphere of what is controverted, in all those matters about which men's minds differ sharply, the Sovereign is either not permitted to act at all or, if he must act, is screened to the uttermost by the doctrine of ministerial responsibility and by the general sentiment of deference to his person and office which prevails. But there is a danger in this. The Monarchy in England may come to undergo the fate that overtook the office of the Mikado of Japan. The Mikado used to be looked upon as so sacred a person that he was allowed to do nothing; and the whole regal authority in Japan passed into other hands. But in England we should not for long revere an inactive Mikado. We respect in the end only the important and the interesting. Unfortunately what is uncontroversial

is only slightly interesting. What people quarrel about is what they care about. And if over a long series of years the Sovereign takes no share in public quarrels, his office may decline into something purely ceremonial, the splendid centre of all national pageants, but exciting only the temperate interest and half-respectful pleasure which men feel for a stately show. It may be a dangerous doctrine, but it is perhaps true, that Conservatism ought to take up the task of preparing public opinion for the idea that the Monarchy should openly take an active part in politics. Doubtless any such assumption of activity after the long interval of years in which the Crown has been screened from all criticism would be attended by many obvious perils; but though less obvious, the danger of the Monarchy becoming discredited as an inoperative ornament and sinking slowly from being the centre of loyalty to be received, first with good-natured toleration and finally with impatient contempt, is perhaps now the more real menace. An active Monarchy would incur the enmity of many, but it would enjoy the respect which in the long run is only given to acknowledged power.

It may be said that no Sovereign could venture to take a public and active part in political controversies, because the Monarchy is hereditary, and the hereditary principle is

not now sufficiently trusted to make it a safe basis for an institution which has to bear the attacks of political combatants. The House of Lords has just been deprived of the greater part of its effective power in controversial matters precisely because (as some may say) the hereditary principle is discredited. Conservative statesmen have already decided that if we are to have an effectual Second Chamber its members must be able to appeal to something besides an hereditary title. If, then, we want a first magistrate to be a political combatant, must we not give up hereditary monarchy, as we are already prepared to give up hereditary legislators, in favour of some more democratically organised institution?

This is a weighty argument against the Sovereign intervening in politics, for it seems plain that the hereditary character of the Monarchy is indispensable to its ceremonial and symbolic function, the importance of which has already been pointed out. An hereditary monarch, differing from an elected president, starts with the prestige of long descent and has, what is perhaps more important still, training from his very earliest childhood in the arts and manners of the great post he is to hold. This aspect of an hereditary office is not sufficiently noticed, but it is only by relying on hereditary succession that you can ensure that training will begin with the

earliest dawn of consciousness. Only an hereditary monarch is brought up from infancy to the task of kingship. These two elements, the prestige of inherited rank and early training, are indispensable to the performance of the part of the great central figure round which the British Empire is gathered. But while it is clear that the Monarchy must remain hereditary, it may be doubted whether it is impossible for any institution founded on heredity to bear the stress of political controversy. The House of Lords was successfully attacked, but not on the ground alone of its hereditary character. It was also indicted for undue partisanship; and attentive students of the contest, whether Liberal or Conservative, will agree that this was the most formidable accusation against it. Certainly a partisan king would be a mischief and would endanger the stability of the Monarchy. But it does not seem inconceivable that the King might really be above party, while playing an active part in political battles. There is indeed a great desire now visible in the public mind for some power in politics which would not be completely dominated by the party system. It is not impossible that a well-judged intervention, sincerely non-partisan in character, in some political conflict by the Sovereign might be welcomed by a large part of the people with

enthusiasm. It would gratify the feeling which seems to be growing strong and widespread that party politicians and organisations are not entirely trustworthy, and yet have made themselves so strong that resistance to them is hopeless. I can imagine that after another twenty years of politics on their present lines the independent leadership of a "patriot king" would be highly popular.

Any development of the Monarchy on these lines is, however, not within the possibilities of the near future. A more immediate interest attaches to the position of the House of Lords. That House appeals to Conservatism in two ways. It is in the first place one of the oldest institutions in the country, descending to us through many centuries and connected in every age with the great events of the past. It is therefore conspicuously part of the existing and time-honoured political system which every instinct of natural conservatism is disposed to reverence and trust. But it is also the part of the constitutional mechanism to which Conservatives are accustomed most to look to check imprudent and revolutionary change. Conservatives have found that these two currents of feeling are in some respects conflicting, and a good deal of the hesitation and consequent weakness of the Conservative Party in respect to the reform of the House of Lords is due to the contrary pressure of these

sentiments. The desire to preserve an old institution with as little alteration as possible makes for leaving the House of Lords as it stands or limiting reform to small changes. The desire on the other hand to have a strong Second Chamber capable of affording an effectual resistance to revolution leads to far-reaching reconstruction of the House of Lords, so as to give it a firm hold on public confidence and respect. Some Conservatives cannot bear to turn upside down what has so august a history and is so famous a feature of the Constitution: other Conservatives, their minds full of the dangers of possible attacks on property and national security, are impatient of anything that stands in the way of setting up the strongest Second Chamber that can be made. A third current of opinion within the ranks of Conservatism is a little impatient of the whole controversy. The more ardent imperialists are so deeply concerned with the problems of uniting the colonial dominions of the Crown to the mother country, and of organising the whole Empire into more effectual power, that they are restless under the necessity of fighting the battle of the House of Lords and think that their cause would prosper more rapidly if the question could be closed and withdrawn from political conflict. They too would support any change, however far-reaching, which would end the

discussion while leaving the country a strong Second Chamber. But all are agreed that the Second Chamber however constituted must have such powers as are entrusted to other Senates in the Parliaments of great nations. It will be the task of Conservative leadership in the future to unite these different currents of opinion in favour of some practical policy.

Upon that task it would be no part of our present business to attempt to enter in detail. But it may be well to draw attention to two or three points of general application. First, purely conservative feeling about the House of Lords is genuine and powerful and has weight much beyond the ranks of the Conservative Party. It would be well, therefore, to change the constitution of the House of Lords only sufficiently to meet the case against it. Secondly, the strongest part of that case was, as already observed, not the hereditary character of the assembly but its partisan complexion. Moderate Liberals would probably acquiesce in any reform of the House of Lords which gave to both political parties an equal voice in its constitution; and on the other hand no settlement would be permanently possible which left the Second Chamber fairly open to the accusation of being constituted with a purely partisan bias to Conservatism. Thirdly, the hereditary principle, though not sufficiently grounded in public

esteem to make it by itself an adequate title for a legislative assembly, could not be altogether cast aside without serious consequences extending beyond the House of Lords. The same argument which has been noticed as essentially important in respect to the Monarchy has real, though slighter, weight in respect to the House of Lords. Only by having a class of men born to be politicians can you ensure the very early training which has often produced that notable skill in parliamentary methods so highly valued in both Houses for many generations. Moreover, since hereditary succession is still inseparably connected in popular sentiment with the idea of exalted rank, to eliminate it altogether from Parliament would be to threaten the position and prestige of the House of Commons as well as that of the House of Lords, and indeed to weaken generally that precious sense of the dignity of civic life which makes many Englishmen spend time and trouble, labouring without reward in the public interest. It can hardly be doubted that the credit and respect by which all public employment in this country is surrounded, and which operates to make men sit on local bodies, value the distinction of the magistracy, and work with unremitting energy to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, is partly due to the union in the House

of Lords of the two ideas of high rank and civic service. From these considerations it appears that we may draw the conclusion that Liberals and Conservatives should take an equal part in constructing a reformed Second Chamber, which should carry on, as much as is consistent with that equality between parties, the character and traditions of the existing House of Lords, and in which some part should still be played by the principle of hereditary succession.

It may seem a paradox, but it is certainly true, that no part of the Constitution stands in more need of judicious reform than the House of Commons. That House appears to be in the course of some transition of which the ultimate effect cannot easily be judged, but which at the particular stage now attained leaves it in an unsatisfactory state. In respect to the House of Commons we are in danger of suffering from that element of make-believe in the national character which has already been adverted to. There is indeed an ambiguity about the House likely to obscure the clearness of insight in the public mind which is the best remedy for make-believe. In one aspect the House of Commons seems the strongest of our institutions. Its vote can dismiss the Government; no legislation can pass but with its approval; and now under the Parliament Act, any legislation which it

persistently approves through two years must become law. When it is remembered that we have under our Constitution no limitations of the absolute sovereignty of Parliament, it seems that no extent of power could be greater than that lodged in the House of Commons. But there is another aspect, and one to which attention has been lately a good deal attracted. The House of Commons, though constitutionally all-powerful, is in practice the obedient instrument of whatever political party has a majority of its members. And this does not merely mean that the minority count for nothing, it also means that the members even of the majority are rather the servants than the masters of their party. There is every year less and less personal independence among members of Parliament: every year they are more and more disposed to vote strictly as their party whips direct. This can hardly be because on the merits of public questions the members of a party are more completely agreed than they used to be. Human nature has not changed, nor are the controversies of our time less naturally prolific of variety of opinion than those of fifty years ago. Independence, it cannot be doubted, has diminished partly from mere partisanship, and partly under the pressure of a system of combined rewards and punishments. If a member of Parliament

votes with his party, he has a good prospect of gratifying natural ambitions for office or for some honour in the gift of the Crown. On the other hand, if he dissents from his party, not only is he shut out from these advantages, but the moment his dissent begins to be seriously inconvenient to the party plans, he is threatened by the party organisation in his constituency first with censure and then with exclusion from Parliament. And in an extreme case, like that of Mr. Harold Cox, he is rejected by them and effectively excluded at the next election. The members of the supreme and all-powerful House of Commons are thus themselves servants strictly schooled to obedience.

It becomes highly interesting and important to enquire where the centre of power is which ultimately sways the House of Commons and the unlimited authority which by the Constitution that House wields. It is interesting and important, but not altogether easy. It may be said that the power lies with the Cabinet; with, that is to say, the fifteen or twenty most leading men of the party in majority. But this would not be always true. Sometimes there may be disagreement within the Cabinet. What force is it that then determines the decision one way or the other? Or again, a question sometimes comes before the Cabinet for decision with a

particular solution backed so strongly within the party that the Cabinet is almost constrained to adopt it. Where is the power that even the Cabinet must obey? The best answer is that the supreme authority within a party is usually exercised by the most active and energetic party organisers throughout the country under the leadership of one or more of the principal men among the party leaders. Sometimes the nominal leader of the party is among these principal men; sometimes he is not. But they derive their strength not merely from their personal position, but because in one way or another they have the ear of what may be called the Praetorian Guard of the party, that is, its most active and ardent workers. If this be true, we have surely grave ground for anxiety. The House of Commons appoints the executive government and has absolute control over legislation. The party in the majority in the House of Commons absolutely controls the House of Commons. That party is itself controlled by the most ardent and energetic of its workers under the guidance of the politicians they like best. This amounts to saying that the supreme authority in the State lies in the hands of extreme partisans, and of the statesmen that extreme partisans most admire. It is hardly possible to imagine a less satisfactory form of government. Yet

this is the reality. The pretence is that the House of Commons represents the people. But in fact the people have neither the dominant voice in choosing the House of Commons nor any certain control over it once it has been chosen. The people have, in practice, only an opportunity of choosing between the party candidates submitted to their choice. It is the ardent partisans—the Praetorian Guards—who choose the candidates, and the electors have only to determine whether they will be represented by the nominee of the Conservative or the Liberal Praetorians, or in rarer cases they may choose a not less disciplined candidate nominated by the Labour Party. Independents may indeed, and sometimes do, stand for Parliament. But electioneering under modern conditions is so largely a matter of organisation and mechanism that an Independent is greatly handicapped in fighting a contest against party nominees. It is the rarest thing in the world for such a candidature to be successful. The only real influence that independent men have is through the desire of the party managers to gain their votes. But this operates with limited effect. For about some controversies the ardent partisans on either side care too deeply to concede much to the feelings of the non-partisan public. And when the House is elected the influence of public opinion is similarly limited. Some-

thing will be done to gain support at the next general election; but whenever the governing party men really care, they will run all risks to carry their policy. Most of all will they do so when the personal credit of one of their trusted leaders is at stake. The formidable fact is that the highest authority of our immense and unequalled Empire lies alternately in the hands of one of two knots of vehement, uncompromising and unbalanced men.

The seriousness of this danger is one of the strongest arguments for what is called the Referendum. Conservative statesmen have proposed an appeal to the people by way of Referendum in the case of Bills of the highest importance which fail of obtaining the consent of the Second Chamber. It seems perhaps anomalous that Conservatives should be the advocates of what is certainly a considerable change and one apparently incongruous to the older aristocratic traditions of the Constitution. But the alternative of being handed over from time to time to the absolute authority of the most vigorous Radical partisans in the country is a much greater danger to Conservatism than any appeal to the people. For, as Conservative politicians are becoming more and more aware, the English people have a strong leaning towards Conservatism and are unlikely to accept any very revolutionary

measure if, apart from all confusing issues, such a measure should singly be laid before them.

So far, Conservatism is associated in the controversies relating to the Constitution only with two main proposals: one for the establishment of a strong and reformed Second Chamber; the other for an appeal to the people on great questions. But Conservatives have been strongly pressed by some counsellors to adopt another and much more hazardous constitutional modification. Their imperialist sympathies have, as elsewhere observed, led them to desire to draw the Empire together in some form of closer federated organisation; and it has been suggested that they might take up their opponents' policy of Home Rule and, with some adjustment, make it the beginning of a scheme for Imperial Federation. If the United Kingdom were divided into four States: England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, it would be necessary to have over them some central Imperial Parliament and possibly, in process of time, the great Dominions across the seas might send representatives to that Parliament. Such is the idea of some imaginative men. But though some Conservative journalists seemed attracted by it at first sight, the whole party have decidedly rejected it. Apart from all other objections to Home Rule, there lies, from an imperial point of

view, a fundamental obstacle in the way of making the four divisions of the United Kingdom separate and building upon them the fabric of a federation. The claim for Ireland made by the Nationalist Party to have a parliament of her own, is based on the assertion that Ireland and England are different nationalities, and those who would divide the United Kingdom into four states similarly affirm that each division would be, and indeed already is, a nationality. Nationality is a word of very uncertain meaning. Nor is this uncertainty troublesome or mischievous as long as all that is meant by the claim of nationality is the magnification of an amiable local sentiment. But if nationality is made the basis of separate parliaments, it begins to be a good deal more than a sentiment. It becomes rather a nursery of many sentiments, which tend to very real discord and division and even conceivably to separation and war. Once convince a population that they are a nationality, and they will begin to long for that full measure of independence in which alone the ideal of nationality can perfectly be realised. To be a nation is to be ranked with the independent nations of the world; to step forward, like Norway, and claim a sovereign's diadem. It is this that finally and effectually alienates imperialist sentiment among Conservatives from any

scheme of federalising the United Kingdom. For to create four nationalities within the United Kingdom would be, not to bring the Empire together, but to divide it, and to cut asunder that central heart which hitherto has been one undivided whole.

If Federal Home Rule fails to attract Conservatives because it involves the recognition of separate nationalities within the United Kingdom, that part of the scheme which relates to Irish Home Rule is repulsive to them because they regard it as the triumph of a movement deeply tainted with Jacobinism. According to Conservative ideas, there has been nothing more Jacobinical in modern politics than the Land League agitation under the leadership of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt. The violence and intimidation that disfigured it; the hideous crimes that ominously coincided with it; the reckless disregard of private property and the cruel oppression which it involved, reproduced some of the worst features of the spirit of French terrorism. Conservatism would fail in its primary character as the opponent of Jacobinism, if it did not oppose to the utmost the setting up an Irish Parliament which would be in the hands of a party whose history is so deeply stained. A principal task, therefore, for Conservatism is to maintain the unity of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and

especially to resist the establishment of an Irish Parliament under Nationalist auspices. The resolve to resist Home Rule throws upon the Conservative Party the duty of finding some solution for that congestion of business in the House of Commons which is sometimes put forward as an argument for Home Rule. This congestion is not really to be relieved by creating an Irish Parliament or even four Parliaments for the four parts of the United Kingdom. For the most serious congestion arises in respect to business which affects the whole United Kingdom. The proper remedy must be sought in some machinery which would relieve the House of Commons of the more detailed and less important portion of its duties. A larger use of the mechanism of Committees would do much. The separation of the House of Commons into two divisions for certain purposes, or the creation of separate bodies by the House of Commons to do such work as might be sent to them, would be measures much more effectual than any scheme for Home Rule in relieving congestion. And the difficulty of congestion applies, it must be remembered, to the House of Commons alone, and neither to the House of Lords nor to the executive Government. Conservatives should address themselves to its cure on their own principle of changing no more than is necessary for the purpose.

In respect to the House of Commons, as in respect to the whole Parliamentary Constitution, Conservatism should be guided by the saying, "I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be to preserve." So ancient and so splendid a fabric must be reverently touched even by restorers' hands, and it would ill become those who, under the protection of the Constitution, have long enjoyed liberty and far pursued civilisation, to spoil that to which they owe so much by careless, impatient or even unnecessary change.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In this book political Conservatism has been viewed as a force called into activity by the French Revolution, and operating against the tendencies that that Revolution set up. It has been argued that Conservatism unites three streams of opinion traceable far back in history, and brought together in one organised force by the Revolution and the antagonism it excited. These three component elements are natural conservatism, that is the distrust of the unknown and the love of the familiar which are inherent in the minds of all men; Toryism, or the defence of Church and King, the reverence for religion and authority; and what for want of a better name has been called imperialism, a feeling for the greatness of the country and for that unity which makes its greatness. From these three elements the policy of Conservatism is compounded. Conservatives defend the Constitution, property and the existing social order, partly from the natural conservative love of what

exists, partly from a dread of injustice threatened to individuals by advocates of revolutionary change. This resistance to injustice finds a moral basis in the religious principles inherited from the Tory adhesion to the Church; and the same cause makes Conservatives the defenders of the Establishment and endowments of the Church and the maintainers of an efficient religious education for the children of the people. But the religious sentiment which is hostile to injustice is also unwilling to acquiesce in the sufferings of people from poverty and its attendant evils. Hence Conservatism comes also to be identified with measures of social improvement designed to raise the condition of the poor. These motives coalesce with the imperialist zeal for the greatness of the country to make Conservatives adopt, whether wisely or foolishly, the policy of Tariff Reform, believed to be in the interest of the national trade and industry, and to afford at the same time a convenient machinery for drawing the colonial Dominions of the Crown into closer co-operation with the mother country. Imperialism further dictates a liberal provision for national defence, and is zealous especially to uphold the naval supremacy on which the safety of the British Islands depends; and stimulated and restrained by a belief, essentially religious, in the reality of the national vocation,

insists in foreign affairs that the national power should be preserved and used in pursuance of that vocation. The three elements thus work together in animating Conservative policy, and form a political creed constructive, balanced and prudent, drawing its inspiration from the elevating sentiments of patriotic enthusiasm and religious faith; tender to the sufferings of humanity, but scrupulous of the obligations of justice; sobering activity by a prudent veneration for experience, and securing the efficiency of progress by basing it on what time has tried and tradition has cemented.

Conservatism is of course in practical politics opposed to Liberalism and to Socialism. But it is not, considered as a system of political thought, directly antagonistic to either. The distinctive characteristic of Liberalism would perhaps be said to be a regard for liberty. Conservatism is certainly not opposed to liberty. On two sides indeed it inclines towards liberty and defends and upholds it. The liberty of the subject has been so largely the purpose of our constitutional system that no party can champion the traditional Constitution without also defending the principles of liberty. And it would need great changes to introduce serious invasions of liberty, of which changes Conservatism, with its distrust of unknown ex-

periments, is the natural opponent. Moreover, the defence of individuals against injustice involves also the preservation of at least the most essential parts of personal liberty. At the present time Liberalism is much more likely to be tempted to transgress the principles of liberty than Conservatism; for the ardent reformer who is anxious to move rapidly, and to see within his own lifetime the consummation of his cherished scheme, finds it hardly possible to pursue the object he has at heart without constraining the freedom and impairing the property of individuals. Liberalism trespasses on the ground more naturally belonging to Tories when it invokes the authority of the State to carry out some scheme of social reform; and in imitating Toryism surpasses it. For the tradition of authority is naturally a Tory tradition, and, but for the influence of Conservative prudence and justice, the successors of the Tories might probably have been ready to use the authority of the State with a freedom which we associate with Socialism. Both Conservatism and Liberalism really occupy a position between the old-fashioned individualist Liberalism of the early nineteenth century and the authoritative methods of the socialist movement. But it may be claimed for Conservatism that it has achieved under happier auspices than Liberalism a compromise between liberty

and authority; for in its reverence for the sanctions of religion, it can appeal to a standard which is the best security against the excess either of liberty or authority. The value of human character, the sacredness of justice on the one side, reverence for authority and tenderness towards human suffering upon the other, make the religious standpoint at once the safest and the most practical for the task of social reform. Toryism even within itself contains balanced principles which make for safety, and when united with the prudence of the natural conservative it forms the most efficient and the most secure political guide for a social reformer.

If Conservatism be not simply antagonistic to Liberalism, it is clear that in pursuing social reform it must often find itself in sympathy at least with some of the objects of Socialism. But there is in the socialist movement, or at least there appears to be to Conservative eyes, an element of Jacobinism which is the true antagonist Conservatives have for more than a hundred years opposed. The Jacobin went indeed to lengths to which no reasonable socialist would dream of following, but there is sometimes a taint of Jacobinism in socialist language. We seem sometimes to catch the Jacobin accent of reckless disregard of private rights; of merciless hatred towards those who, perhaps through no fault

of their own, have become associated with some real or fancied abuse; of that disposition, not gradually to develop one state of society out of another, but to make a clean sweep of institutions in the interest of a half-thought-out reform. It is in so far as these elements are present in the socialist movement that Conservatism is opposed to it. Conservatism arose to resist Jacobinism, and that is to this day its most essential and fundamental characteristic. But in so far as socialists can be prevailed upon scrupulously to respect the principle of justice and to divest their programme of all traces of vindictiveness, there is nothing to prevent Conservatives considering their proposals, each upon its merits. It will, however, take better economic arguments than have yet been brought forward to convince any Conservative of the possibility of abolishing, or even very considerably reducing, the sphere that competition at present plays in the production and distribution of wealth.

It will be noted that Conservatism has in this book only been considered in its nobler aspects. There are undoubtedly operating on the Conservative side in party politics, as on the side of other political parties, much baser elements. A critic of Conservatism might complain that selfishness, avarice, and an uncontrolled taste for alcoholic liquors

were all elements that made for the success of Conservative politicians. But whatever admixture of justice there might be in that criticism, it does not seem to me to fall within the compass of my task to consider Conservatism otherwise than in its ideal form. The sculptor who endeavours to represent the human figure aims at carving an Apollo or a Venus, rather than ugly or deformed, but not less human, men and women. And in a political treatise there is this special reason for avoiding the unworthy which less cogently applies to artistic work, that by representing the ideal something is done to induce men to act up to its standard. If this book serves to lead any one to be a Conservative after the pattern which it has been endeavoured here to trace, the book will not have been useless. Conservatives contending against the evils of Jacobinism under the influence of religious or patriotic or even merely prudent motives will, whether they be right or wrong in the particular controversies they may be engaged upon, be playing a noble part and one elevating to themselves and to their fellow countrymen.

The religious and patriotic aspects of Conservatism are unquestionably the noblest, but it may perhaps be doubted whether they are so powerful in engaging support for the Conservative Party as the humbler attractions

of natural conservatism. The distrust of the unknown and the love of the familiar are motives to which no mind is a stranger; and especially at the present time when there is a mild scepticism prevalent about the promises of which politicians on both sides have been prolific, these quiet motives are strong indeed. They fall out of sight in active political controversy, and they have little charm for politicians and journalists who naturally like better themes for literary or oratorical effort. But they are present in every human heart, ceaseless monitors against the dangers of what may be, untiring preachers of the merits of what is. It is possible that the recent ill-success of the Conservative Party has been in some degree due to neglect of these unsensational but omnipresent allies in favour of appeals to more sublime but less potent emotions.

There is but too much reason to think that Conservatism will need all its strength in the near future for a struggle with the enemy it arose to destroy—the Jacobinism which has not for many years been so menacing as it is to-day. But we may look forward to that struggle with good courage. The English are the wisest people in the world. Never yet has their political judgment been more than trivially or temporarily led astray. And the great causes of which Conservatism is

peculiarly the champion have always appealed to them with stirring force. If it be faithful to the advocacy of religion, patriotism and prudence we need not fear but that it will surely prevail.

March, 1912.

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